



WHATEVER is said against the atom militant its services to the public busybody can hardly be denied. Many a finger-in-the-pieman has been spared the anguish of having no pie handy by getting down to a few choice words about the prospect of global annihilation. However, in noting that the published agenda for the Labour Party conference includes one hundred and twenty-six motions on nuclear war it is only fair to add that it also includes eight on the cost of living.

Patter of Little Heads

PRESS photographs of Mr. Ho Chi-minh chucking Warsaw children underneath the chin were accompanied by speculations on why he had replaced Mr. Mao Tse-tung, at the eleventh hour, as chief Asian guest at the Polish National Day celebrations. It seems



possible that Mao, realizing that chin-chucking was inevitably in store, became suddenly thoughtful about recent news of arch-chucker Malenkov.

Cairo, Wednesday

CORRESPONDENTS in the Middle East are becoming increasingly alarmed at the rapidly widening field of developments in those parts. New trouble spots seem to erupt daily. A fellow has no sooner located Nizwa and Salalah and Wasit than the dateline shifts to Jebel Akhdar or Nebhkaniya, while fresh international celebrities with names like Ghalib, Talib and Suleiman bin Hamyar al Nabhani are suddenly the gossip of the bazaars. What is the eager public to be told about the sheikdom of Sharjah, or the political significance

of the Batinah force at Sohar? What of Gilgil? Is it a place, a person or a kind of hat? Correspondents sigh for other times, when people were satisfied with a couple of lines about Wing Commander Saleh-Salem, and just another easy crack about undershirt dancing.

No Sale

BRITISH Overseas Airways are now using the publicity appeal, "When Flying to U.S.A. or Canada on Business Take Your Wife Too." Experts are of



opinion that this is the most unsophisticated headline in the history of modern advertising.

Latest on the Muddle

EVEN trained interpreters of political English had trouble with Mr. Macmillan's "There is no sudden crisis" speech. For one thing, it followed very closely on Mr. Thorneycroft's "There is no crisis" speech, and suggested a possible rift between a Chancellor who pooh-poohed the crisis and a Prime Minister who only pooh-poohed the suddenness. Mr. Macmillan's bag of literary allusions was also oddly mixed. In quoting *Alice* was he hoping to spike the guns of cartoonists and other irreverent commentators, who have turned Carroll against politicians so tirelessly and with such effect? If so, why go on to repeat the *dramatis personae* of *Pilgrim's Progress*—a clear invitation for critics to identify them with his distinguished Cabinet colleagues? Was the mention of "the 64,000-dollar question" a heavy attempt at the common touch (in a speech about

inflation), or a skilful trick to win a mention across the Atlantic? Certainly he became unblushingly American with his remark that the British people "had never had it so good"—an expression which falls distastefully from crusted old Tory lips: but, there again, even trained interpreters aren't sure whether the "had it" was intended as racy U.S. idiom or fatalistic English slang.

No Comment

THE passing of the Aga Khan was handled for the most part with restraint and dignity by the newspapers of the world. A number of reporters could have kicked themselves, however, for not being the one who thought to put to Prince Sadruddin the inquiry, "What did he leave Rita Hayworth?"

Understood

NAVAL disciplinarians in Plymouth made good use of the bus strike, stimulating the initiative of ratings by warning that it would not be accepted as an excuse for overstaying leave. Initiative was stimulated to such a degree in some cases that overdue



ratings pretended to have returned by British Railways—an excuse traditionally accepted at R.N. establishments everywhere.

New Possibilities Now Probable

LATEST news on the chance of Cyprus negotiations is that there is "hope of a basis." Informed quarters, though nervous of committing themselves, are making this guess on the strength of a report that the British Ambassador in

Athens has made a veiled remark in correspondence with a Mr. Zeonon Rossides which is thought to be intended as "an invitation to Archbishop Makarios to clarify a hint that he had previously thrown out." Despite these sensational developments, however, it is understood that no definite order has been given for the withdrawal of British troops from the island.

Still Life

HOLE-IN-THE-ROAD spectators in this country are envious of fellow-enthusiasts in New York, where special arrangements have been made for them to



watch, from grandstands constructed for the purpose, the erection of a new \$70,000,000 building. If the idea does catch on over here it will pay the organizers to take a tip from Lord's, with a prominent display of posters warning "No Work Guaranteed."

Policy of Drift

M. BOURGÈS-MAUNOURY somewhat disappointed the Anglo-American Press Association by telling them that France could expect "no settlement by magic in Algeria." The situation has reached a state when a Prime Minister should try everything once.

Worm's Turn

How near the surface anarchy lies was startlingly demonstrated in the early days of the busmen's strike, when British people over the whole country, after years of meek submission to every kind of discomfort and indignity, struck back at last by parking their cars on the bus stops.

Solidarity

SEE how the British worker, when he learns

His *Daily Herald's* saved from its distress,

Records his satisfaction and returns
To his accustomed *Mirror* or
Express.

RESETTLEMENT BOARD

"GOOD morning, General. Glad you could come. Do sit down, and smoke by all means. Now let's have a look through the file and see what we can turn up for you. It used to be the nationalized industries for all you chaps, but we're running a bit short of them now, eh? You wouldn't like to be an admiral, General, I suppose? They still seem to be making quite a lot of those. Then the Senior Radical Club's after a secretary, how would that do? Any catering experience? I doubt if being P.M.C. of an officers' mess in 1932 is really what they have in mind, but we can see what they say. Four-fifty a year, though we might bump them up a bit, four-seventy-five, say. Otherwise there doesn't seem to be anything just at this moment. But if something comes along that seems in any way up your street, I'll let you know right away.

"Ah, Major. Now, let's see, what are your qualifications? Good organizer, good horseman, fluent Urdu and Kiswahili, experienced in handling men. I suppose you haven't any money to invest? I've one or two inquiries here for chaps with capital to put into a business. Not chicken-farms, of course, something a bit more solid—buying up old theatres,

say, and making them into offices. Well, you know, that's why the Government pays you all this compensation, so you can start out on your own in something. Of course, I know it's hard when you've four children at school. Still, we all have to make sacrifices these days. How's this, warden of a juvenile delinquents' home in Fulham, ten pounds a week? Apart from that I don't know what I can offer you. You haven't got a university degree, by any chance? I wonder if you've thought about emigrating at all?

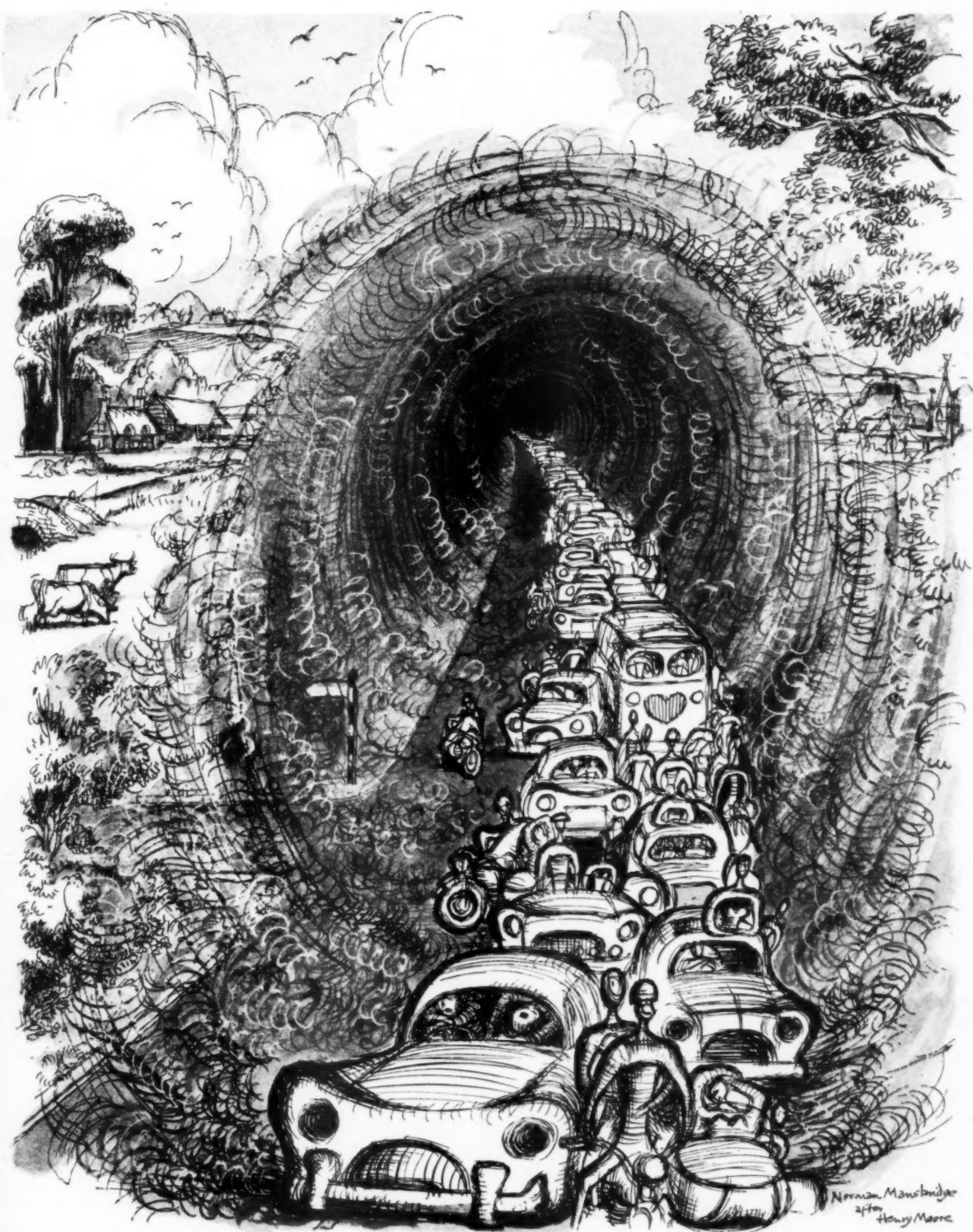
"Hello, sar'-major. It is sar'-major, isn't it? Well now, what can we do for you? Twenty years' service, hum. Age forty-one, ha. Well, I have a vacancy for a night-watchman on this new building site in Knightsbridge. Six pounds ten a week, but if you find a good solicitor you might get them to pay you overtime for sleeping. I know you live in Aldershot, but there's quite a decent train service from Waterloo. Well, then they want porters at Hamfridges' warehouse. They're mostly coloured there, but I dare say they'll be glad to see a few ex-soldiers, get some discipline about the place, eh? No, the money isn't much, but after all, it's a job, isn't it? Give it a trial anyway, and if you find you don't like it after a year or two come and see me again.

"Good-morning, Mr. Atkins. Sit you down. Cigarette? Gum? Well, I expect you're glad to be out, aren't you. I see you've been A.W.O.L. most of your service. Now let's see, what was your trade in the Army? General duty man, wasn't it? Well, jolly good thing to be able to turn your hand wherever it's wanted, I say; these skilled tradesmen get into a bit of a rut, you know. Now I've got the very thing for you here. At Westminster—very old-established House. Start at seventeen-fifty a year; very good prospects, too, if you stick at it you can rise to six thousand a year and four thousand a year tax-free expenses. Just sign your name on this form, Mr. Atkins, or make your mark if you'd rather. And now, if you'll excuse me, I have another sixty-six thousand chaps waiting outside."

B. A. Y.



"American Bar Association or Boy Scout Jamboree?"



A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

Projection of BRITAIN



Some Hints on Improving the Overseas Information Services

By Pamphlet dropped from the Air

This gay little leaflet, one of a series, has been prepared by Dr. Chas. Hill. It is addressed to the good peoples of Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq, Somaliland and Egypt. The diagram is by Mohammed Poona-Smythe, a second-year student of economics at London University.

HELLO, chums! You may wonder, perhaps, why my little natter is printed in English instead of your native tongue. I will tell you why. It is because I have faith in Britain.

I want to flush away some of the rubbish that is talked about this great country. I want you to know the truth about Britain's economic and foreign policies.

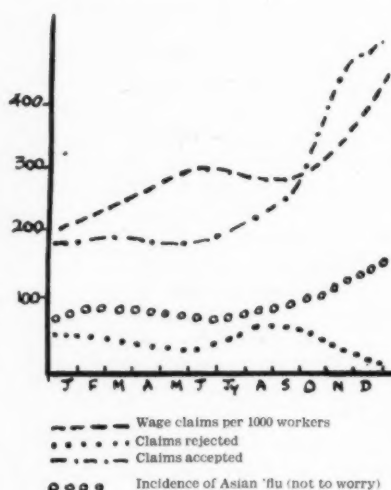
We believe, friends, in "fair shares." Every year the Government issues more and more money to enable wages to rise by about 7 per cent. To get these increments our workers don't have to work harder or longer. There are no "strings." We trust our workers not to take too much out of the common pool. We have the finest Mint in the world. We have the finest Bank of England.

Everyone is welcome in Britain. We allow refugees to come here from all parts of the world—Italians, Hungarians, Germans, Russians, even Egyptians. And we look after them. The Hungarians and Italians are quite prepared to work in our mines, but mining is a hazardous occupation and we prefer our guests to occupy themselves with lighter duties.

We have no colour-bar to speak of. At this very moment the West Indians (some of them as black as your hat!) are playing cricket here. In August the Egyptians will be swimming our Channel.

If you come to Britain (why don't you?) you would be impressed, I'm

sure, by the unfailing courtesy and joviality of the common people. We have no political friction; both parties (Labour and Conservative) have exactly



the same policy (inflation), and the public is even now showing its approval by granting its legislators in both Houses very substantial increases in pay.

We live, I suppose, very much as you do. We work, read our newspapers, worry unnecessarily about minor afflictions like constipation (Lor luvaduck, the old innards have to take a day off sometimes, don't they?), and watch television. We want a forty-hour week because with so much money about we need more time for shopping. In recent years many people just haven't been able to get through all their spending without missing part of the telly, and if there's one thing the British won't stand for it's a cut in culture.

You know, folks, my country is not always understood by you people in the Middle East. You think of us, if you think at all, as exploiters, last-ditch representatives of Old Colonialism, decadent plutocrats, and gourmands. (Eat a lot of what y'tummy fancies is

what I say.) You think all this because we are by nature a reticent people. The voice of Britain has been silent because we preferred our achievements to speak for themselves.

Some people—the Gypoos thought so, didn't they?—believe that Britain has just about "had it," that we have become a second-class power. Bunkum! Why, between April, 1952, and June, 1953, our gold and dollar reserves improved by no less than 2·3 per cent compared with the corresponding period. Plutocracy? Yes, by golly, and we're proud of it.

You say we don't export capital to undeveloped countries as we used to? Well now, it wasn't Britain that refused to finance the Nile dam, y'know. Middle-East is East and Middle-West is West and never the twain shall meet, as our poet Kipling might have written. (We still retain our inborn and salutary sense o' humour, you see).

We are not, never have been and never will be, a satellite of the United States. It is quite true—why deny it?—that the Yanks, as we call 'em, have enormous military strength deployed here in Britain. They certainly wouldn't be here at all if the East and Middle East were somewhere in the Atlantic!

Look, Ali! I'm quite sure that if you wanted bases in Britain your request would be received with politeness and every consideration. Can't say fairer than that.

A second-class power? Not bloomin' likely. Don't forget that we have the H-bomb.

Well, that's all for now. I'll be writing again soon. If you have any little problems don't forget to write to Charlie Boy. Don't worry too much about acne, beri-beri, pellagra and so on: they are Nature's way of cleaning out the old pipes and purifying the blood stream. Chin chin, your old friend, Chas.

P.S. You'll agree, I hope, that a country able to find an additional two

million quid a year (just like that!) to finance overseas propaganda must be in a pretty healthy economic condition.

A. B. H.

By British Council Lecture

(Where possible the lecturer should wear some costume associated with the Arts in Britain, as for instance a skiffle-group shirt or a Morris dancer's hat.)

GOOD evening! Yes, please carry on smoking if you wish. Now, I'm sure the question which most acutely occupies your minds as you sit cross-legged in your tents* these fine summer evenings is "How stand the Arts in Britain?" My friends, you need have no fear. The nation which gave you Landseer and Henty, Coates and William Douglas Home continues to foster and to nourish all that is extraordinary in Music, Literature, Art and Drama.

Take for example the emergence of the Television Topper. Which other country in the world could have evolved such a sweetly pretty creature out of the fleshy hoyden that was once the chorus-girl? (Lantern slide of a Topper, thin, dressed as a tassel-dancer, with completely naked wrists, ankles, neck, face and hands, smiling coyly and doing some kind of a tap-dance.) Yes, the nation that can rid the music hall of sex for the sake of the kiddies is capable of really great things in the Arts. The

*Or cabins, thorps, dorps, temples, *chât-caux*, teepees, kraals, piazzas, caves, wigwams, etc., as the case may be.



Love of Animals

secret is, my friends, that we British are not afraid.

Take holes. Have we been afraid to bore them in our sculptures? We have not. Since we place freedom above everything, we jolly well don't care *what* our sculptors do. Nor are we parochial in our tastes. We can appreciate a hole in a foreign piece of sculpture just as well as a hole in an English one, and as long ago as 1954 we had discovered Van Gogh. In our National Gallery we have works by *many* foreigners, and it is the ambition of one out of every thousand Englishmen to go in and see them before he dies. Some in fact do.

In the world of music Miss Eileen Joyce needs, I am sure, no introduction to you. It was she who initiated that combination of *haute couture* and Chopin which probably rescued the noted composer of *Les Sylphides* from untimely oblivion. The fact that she hails from Australia is but a further demonstration of the way in which the Arts help to bind the British Commonwealth of Nations together in a great big happy family. (Lantern-slide of Mr. Nehru joining in the chorus of "Waltzing Matilda.") Then there are the Proms. O my backward friends—could you but be present while those rapt hundreds stand amid balloons and streamers to sing *Land of Hope and Glory*, you would realize that Beethoven and Chabrier, Honegger and Brahms, Glinka and Stravinsky all are safe while the Albert Hall remains. Then, our young people are buying more gramophone records than ever before. Those who can spare the time become performers themselves, for it is notable that one British teenager out of every two is capable of earning money by rendering such traditional folk-songs as *Freight Train* or *Don't You Rock Me Daddy-O* as superbly as anybody else, if not more so.

The collecting-box now being passed among you, by the way, is for your kind contributions to a fund to save the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, from being kicked to pieces and replaced by a bear-pit.

Meanwhile, the Drama is booming. Nowhere in the world has the theatre-goer such an enviable choice of whodunits and mirth-provoking farces as in London. Actors are encouraged to work hard and keep sober by a system of Honours Lists. Managers are encouraged to keep the price of seats reasonably



Sporting Spirit

high by the fact that the public has forgotten about the Entertainments Tax being cut. There is a lively air of experiment abroad. Novelists lift the dialogue out of their novels and have it spoken aloud, with scenery. Mr. Robert Morley proves that operetta is hard to kill in England. Repertory digs are packed with future dramatists trying to echo John Osborne's mighty line. And Mr. Harold Hobson has been to France *again*. Oh, fear not, my friends, as you huddle in your deserts,* that Britain will ever fail you when it comes to keeping culture's dear old flag a-flying!

Perhaps most thrilling of all, you may expect a constant flow of translations of our books. By general consent these now fall into three main categories:

1. Novels about young men who feel out of things because they never went to war against any of you.
2. Fascinating biographies of unusually obscure celebrities.
3. Books about unlikely parts of Spain.

Well, my friends, I have merely skimmed the surface, as it were! You must wait until next month, at the same time, for me to enlarge upon Britain's artistic scene: on the street musicians, the statesmen-painters, the titled panelists, the B films, *Blighty*, the cultural chatter in Soho's drinking clubs, the visits of Royalty to fashionable comedies,

*In localities West of Suez, substitute "plazas."

our poets singing in the streets, the Albert Memorial, the arrival and departure of Brendan Behan, memories of *Oklahoma!* and *Annie Get Your Gun*, and all the hundred and one things that go to make Britain the most artistically stimulating place in the world to-day. Till next month, then—cheerio!

ALEX

By Broadcast Transmission

(a) **Radio.** *A general-purpose script on the British Way of Life, suitable for use in Arabic, Cypriot, Russian, Erse, Bowery, etc. (Crown Copyright Reserved)*

Hello, there! For the next twenty-six weeks at this time I shall be telling you some of the many wonderful things about Britain, about its policemen, its lifeboat services, its trolleybus statistics and many more thrilling matters. Do not fail to listen, as you will learn much, particularly if you live in a backward country. Did you know, for example, that London has its own anti-locust research centre? Or that our judges and barristers always remove their wigs in hot weather? These are but samples of what you are in for.

But to-day I want to talk about the ordinary man and woman. For we have these in our country just as you do in yours, and in fact they make up the vast proportion of our population. Even in a land of freedom and opportunity like ours it is not possible for everyone to be a Selwyn Lloyd or David Eccles.

Our country is sometimes referred to



Gallantry towards Womanhood

as a "precious stone set in the silver sea"—indeed our poet Shakespeare used that very expression; and sometimes as a "property-owning democracy," because, though it may seem very strange to you, Britain belongs to its ordinary men and women. They own their own railways and power stations and coal-mines and gasworks and post offices, and this does not even mean that they have to do any work in them. Many ordinary men who are part-owners of the railways, for example have never driven an engine into the London Bridge buffers in their lives, but instead are engaged in processing molasses or weather forecasting. They are content to delegate the management of their property to experienced public men who feel at home with deficits of £100,000,000 and can explain them away.

We have no class distinctions now. In the old days some people had great wealth and some were very poor. Now we are all very poor. If you came to England you would not be able to tell the difference between Prince Charles and any other little preparatory school boy in russet shorts. And Prince Philip, his father, appears on television just like any ordinary challenger in "Double Your Money" or "Beat the Clock." By the way, if you are a backward nation with television I expect you will be seeing those very British programmes soon.

We are, you see, a property-owning monarchy as well as a property-owning democracy. It sounds crazy but is rather typical, really. Our monarch is a Queen at the moment, and at her home, Buckingham Palace, often gives dinner-parties to ordinary men and women such as famous actresses or big bankers. Outside the Palace other ordinary men and women are free to look through the railings. Sometimes they see the guests; if not, there is sure to be some pageantry, such as the Changing of the Guard, or a constable being sacked for growing a beard.

Well, I see my time is up. I hope I have given you some idea why Britain is called Great. Next week I shall tell you about Sadler's Wells Opera House, the Central Council for the Care of Cripples and our stockpile of nuclear weapons. Cheerio for now.

(b) **Television.** *Though every effort should be made to obtain foreign screenings*



No Racial Discrimination

of suitable British material, e.g. *Black-pool Night*, interviews with Mr. Thorneycroft, or *Dimbleby* trailing his cable through ducal residences operated for gain, it may often be necessary to purchase commercial "spots." A few suggestions are given below:

Quarter-Minute

The waiters are gay,
The meals excel,
You'll love your stay
At a British Hotel.

Words by T. S. Eliot
Music by Benjamin Britten
Animation by Annigoni

Half-Minute

"London Town" (No. 1.) Film of laughing City workers entering Underground trains during the evening rush-hour. Porters exchange Cockney wit. On the sound-track, "Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner," sung by Kirsten Flagstad. (Sequels would show laughing Society women queuing for the Old Bailey; laughing Trade Union leaders addressing strike meetings, etc.)

One Minute

"My job as a Minister of the Crown" (No. 1.) Mr. Ernest Marples repacking broken Christmas parcels in the Mount Pleasant sorting office. He speaks in close-up. "Don't forget, the last date for posting from Thailand (Buraimi, Formosa, Magnitogorsk, etc.) is..." Displays label, camera tracks in to read "Santa Claus, North Pole." (Next in the series, Mr. Aubrey Jones at the coal face.)

Fifteen Minutes

A Party Political Broadcast.

J. B. B.



"O-o-o-o-ooh!"

The Years Between Commas

By RICHARD MALLET

NOW, I ask you to take it into your head that it was only last week that I saw a news report in which a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl witness of some kind of misdemeanour was quoted as describing the wrongdoer concerned as "about 38." It will strike at the very root of the principle of topicality (which is what I want it to do, mind you) if you now admit that you find this no more and no less enthralling than you would find it on being advised that I actually saw the report rather more than a year ago. Well? I estimate that about half of you won't admit it, but if you're one of that half, you keep quiet. I don't want to know how the other half lives. I'm only half-living myself.

This Argus-eyed little creature's observation has stuck in my mind for three reasons—or four, if you count the fact that I made a note of it at the time. One is that a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl's extempore appraisal of a man's age may be expected to fall a little short of complete accuracy, the second is that she might just as well have said "about 37½"; but the third is the most important. It is that over the years I have grown more and more bedevilled (as by so much else) by the attitude of the popular newspaper to age.

Long ago I projected a dissertation on this subject which was to be called "The Age-in-Brackets Racket"; that, in fact, shows you how long ago—for nowadays they don't put it between brackets. Commas are easier, less liable to get reversed, and less obviously widowed if one is forgotten. Miss X, 25, foils gem grab; Y, 37, described as a tortfeasor, is given an absolute discharge; Mr. Z, 42, wins this month's prize of a lifetime's free replacement of brake-linings; girl, 7, falls 30 feet—lives. They *used* to put it in brackets.

One rather odd point is that only certain kinds of news-item are understood to need any mention of age in exactly that way. However unknown to the average reader before, the speaker at the Federation of Federators' Annual General Meeting doesn't get the figure and the commas; if anything, he is more likely to be accorded a sly mention of his *income* in brackets (they haven't yet, I think, got so far as to use commas for income). But if he gets run over on the way home, or divorces his wife, in the figure goes—unless, and this brings us to the second odd point, he is somebody of whom we *have* heard before. Then (and the same applies even when he makes a speech) he gets his age usually before his name, in words, not figures, in an unwieldy adjective strung on a

rattling little chain of hyphens. Seventy-seven-and-a-half-year-old Sir Nu Lo, genial Chinese Chairman of the Society for the Encouragement of Temperatures Below Minus 273° C., said "Let us keep cool" (*applause*). Figures and commas are, to put it plainly, lower in the social scale than words and hyphens.

But why should age be news at all? The reason is not perhaps in the same mysterious category as the reason for other at first sight senseless conventions (such as that lunatic fringe on the end of a pyjama cord). One can at least suggest something. The idea might be, I suppose,

that readers are expected to be interested to see somebody in the news with some kind of resemblance to themselves, something they have in common. Only a comparatively few people are six-foot, or handsome, or motherly, or even short, balding; but everybody has an age, and the chances are that when one is mentioned not only all readers of that age and all readers who have wormed their way through that age but also all readers who happen to know somebody of that age will feel a momentary stab of interest. This chap whose name is in print here was actually born in the same year as I was; well, well—quite a narrow escape I've had... It might have been me. We began side by side, but diverged—like *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*.

It could also be that to mention someone's age is thought to be the simplest and shortest way of giving the reader some kind of mental image of him. There may be no room for his description, but we have at least something to go on if we are told his age. But this assumes the frantic hypothesis that people of the same age look alike, which anybody who has been a particular age even for a short time will agree is quite untenable. Some people of, e.g., 31 have beards, and others don't even have chins; I knew one once who would, if somewhat smaller, have been hard put to it to avoid being sent to the Ministry of Agriculture as a suspected Colorado beetle.

No; it remains a mystery, and an annoying one. I have been considering it since 1947, which was also the year in which they first X-rayed a penguin, and I shall go on considering it, among my other preoccupations; for I like to get things cleared up and settled—it still gives me a sense of unease and non-fulfilment to reflect that the war ended leaving me at least five All Clears in hand. It must worry others, too, and I am anxious to help them. But these are not good days for a man with a really helpful disposition. Lame dogs willing to be assisted over stiles (though I admit they must find it an uncomfortably awkward and even painful business) don't grow on trees, and for that matter would be even harder for me to find if they did.



"Correct. Now will you stick at G.C.E. or try one more question for a doctorate?"

Witchery

By CLAUD COCKBURN

WHEN he chanced to overhear some people saying that the girl was a witch, General Shrewnham-Mailes mistook the word they were using, but this fazed him not at all. To begin with, one knows how people talk nowadays. Furthermore, if other women in their spiteful gossip chose to describe the beautiful girl it was his desire and intention to marry in that way, all that proved was that they were envious of his lively and lovely intended.

Men seemed to be a little scared of her too. Naturally. Naturally it would take a Shrewnham-Mailes to deal with a girl like that. And here, a year or so later, was Shrewnham-Mailes dealing with her who had by now been privileged to become his bride.

She said "Well, all I can say is, if you ever behave in that way again something very unpleasant is going to happen. You know I'm a witch, don't you?"

Shrewnham-Mailes laughed lightly.

"Oh no, I wouldn't say that, not really," he said, hearing no better than before, "though sometimes you act a little like that."

Thinking nothing of it, he soon

afterwards behaved again in the way of which she had complained.

Thereupon Leonora, for such was her name, transformed herself from a woman into a Crufty spaniel with a glossy coat and an expression of the eyes which, when turned on anyone except Shrewnham-Mailes, indicated good will and a sweet nature.

"But this," shouted the General, goggling at the flop ears and swaying stump of tail, "is sheer witchcraft."

"Didn't anyone tell you I was a witch?" asked Leonora.

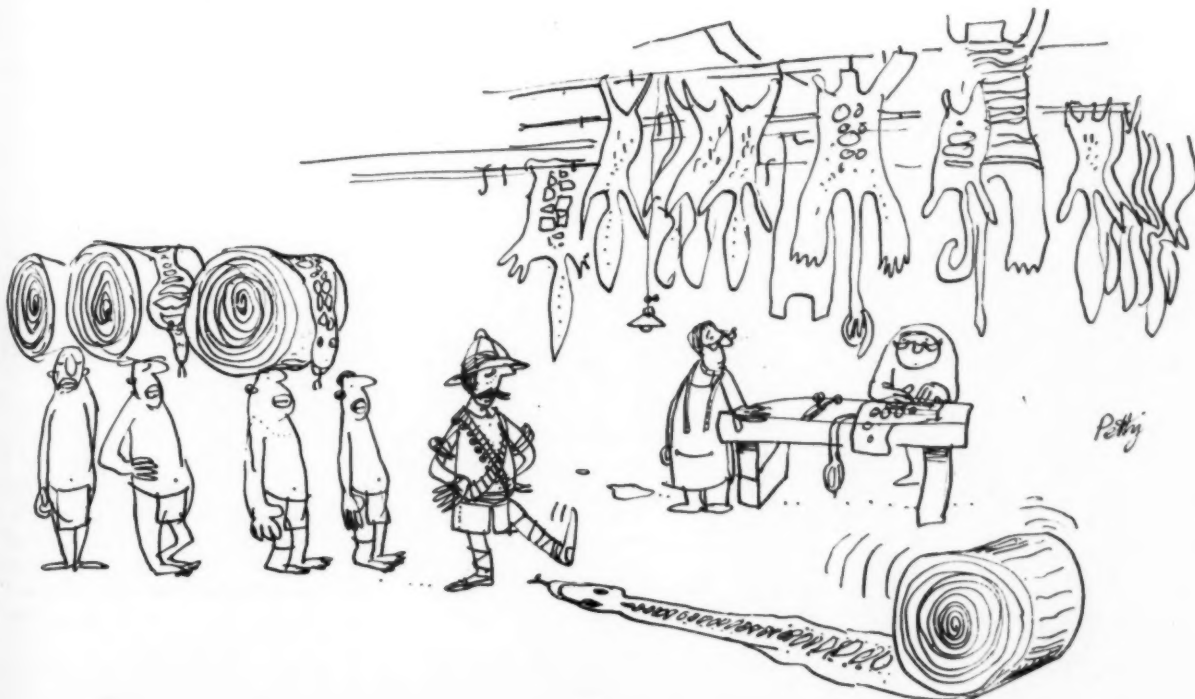
"I misunderstood," mumbled Shrewnham-Mailes, recalling the thing he had overheard.

"Better get yourself a good hearing-aid," said Leonora, vouchsafing him these few final words before lapsing into an unintelligible doggy whine.

When he left for the War Office she followed, banging her nose against the door of the taxi and whimpering piteously. The General swore at her. The taxi-driver said "Have a heart. Won't do you no harm to take the poor dog along. They get lonely. Isn't right to just go off and leave them. Breaks their hearts."

With a faint but terrifying premonition of the shape of things possibly to come, Shrewnham-Mailes, who was used to making estimations of situations, made an estimation of this one. If he said "The hell with the dog" he would be up against the British public and soon denounced as the kind of brute who would send innocent young National Service men to the glasshouse for no good cause. If he said "You are referring to my wife who happens to have transformed herself temporarily, I hope and believe, into a spaniel" the taxi-driver would tell the doorman at the War Office that he was mad or drunk.

He said "Oh, a'l right," and at the War Office thought to pursue a general policy of appeasement, showing off Leonora to his fellow-generals. They admired politely and said he ought to enter that spaniel for a show. "Well trained, too," they said genially. So soon as everyone was committed to this line of approbation Leonora did a number of ill-trained and thoroughly disobliging things. She finally ate the draft of an important memorandum being prepared for the Secretary of State.



The fellow-generals, when Shrewnham-Mailes was out of earshot, said "Bit steep his bringing his damn dog in here."

She went every day, and a number of bad marks were chalked up against Shrewnham-Mailes. As a result, two cosy assignments which might well have been his were given to others.

Half frantic, he said "Leonora, now listen."

Leonora barked.

She barked at nights, too, after deliberately sneaking out into the street and staying there until long after the General's bedtime. He thought for a while that it would be a good thing to teach her a lesson and not let her in. Neighbours hurried to her aid. They rang and rang his bell.

"Your poor dog's got shut out," they said.



Because he was never seen at the War Office or at such functions as cocktail parties for foreign military attachés without Leonora, he became identified by columnists and press photographers as "the dog-loving General." A gossip-writer stated as a fact that General Shrewnham-Mailes never planned any major military exercise without communing with his spaniel. When a man from the Dogs' Protection Association came round looking for a ten-guinea subscription, Leonora licked the General's hand and looked at him adoringly.

"You certainly have won that dog's love," said the D.P.A. man. The General paid up.

For a time he viewed his association with Leonora in her spaniel form as an unmitigated curse. Then he began to reflect that as the general-with-the-dog he was somebody. He was aware that the public esteemed and trusted him and that it was inclined to look askance at other generals—not to mention admirals and air marshals—as being, by contrast, cruel to or at least neglectful of dogs.

Mothers of young National Service men wrote to him saying that with generals like him about they felt their sons were in good hands.

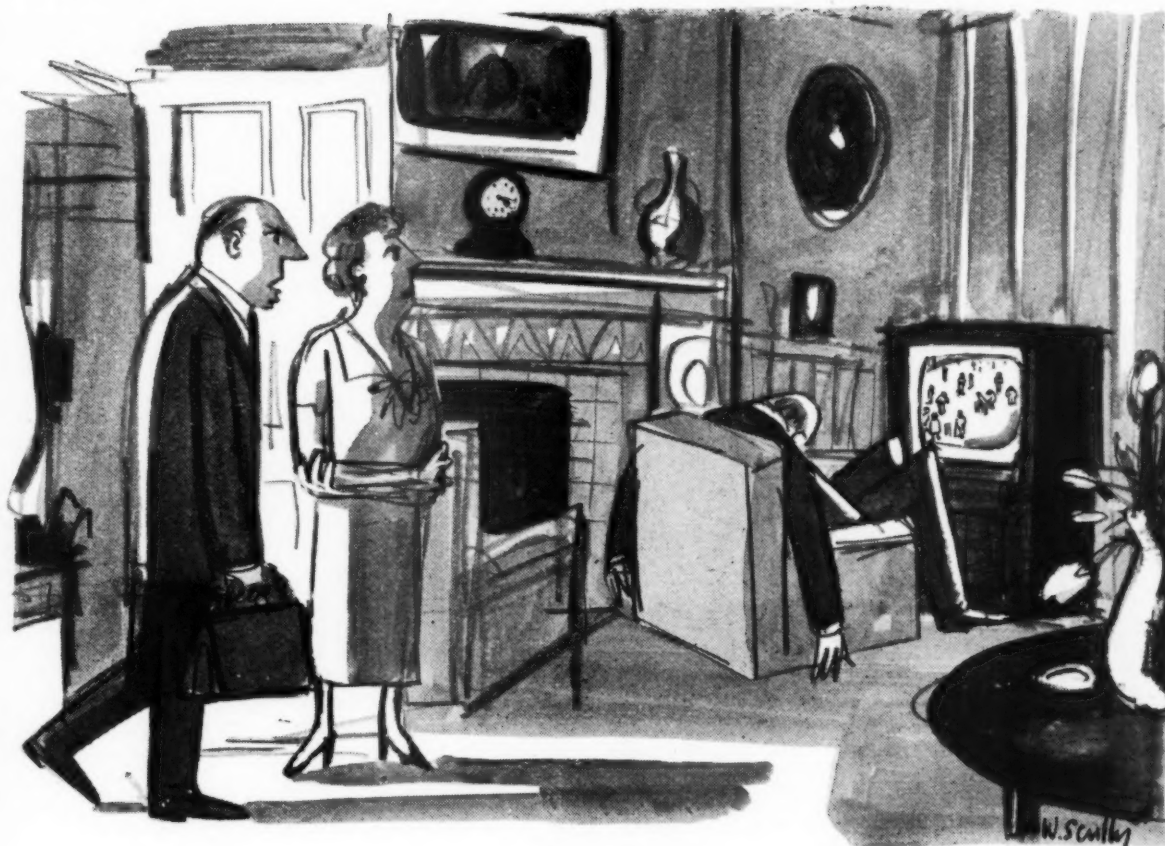
As Britain's foremost dog-loving general—a distinction which could one day land him in the Birthday Honours List—he accepted an invitation from his old school to be guest of honour at the Founder's Day celebrations, make the principal speech, and "do please bring your dog."

He had never made a public speech before and was nervous. A fellow-general said "It doesn't much matter what you say, but whatever you do don't use that corny old thing about how your dog ate your speech this morning so this is all impromptu. The boys will have heard that chestnut over and over again. Every bad public speaker uses it."

He worked most of the night writing out his speech, and in the morning, in the car on the way to the school, Leonora ate it.

When he got there he found that on account of widespread public interest in the Dog-loving General the affair was to be televised. He became more nervous than ever.

"Matter of fact," he said, coughing and gulping on the platform, "rather



"It seems we can dispense with the tranquillisers—at least, until the end of the season."

peculiar thing happened on the way down here this morning."

"Your dog ate your speech, I suppose," sneered a fifteen-year-old voice from somewhere in the hall.

Punch-drunk but still thinking of the Honours List, Shrewnham-Mailes said that while a certain type of foreigner might term it sentimentality, he felt that the Englishman's love of his dog was by no means the least important or formative part of the national character. In fact he would go further and say to all his young friends in that hall that to develop a proper attitude to a dog was indispensable to the development of those qualities of thought for others, of comradeship and self-control without which the Army, for example, would not be what we all knew it to be.

"I always say," he said, remembering a phrase from his written speech, "that dogs train us just as much as we train them."

Leonora waited until then, and then

went for him—coming suddenly from behind, where nobody could observe her action, and fastening her teeth in his calf.

Swinging round, Shrewnham-Mailes aimed a savage kick at her. She crouched in an attitude which, he knew by experience, meant she was going to make a spring at his stomach. Mad with the pain in his leg and the fear of worse to come, he snatched from the table the Sixth Form Essay Prize—a heavily bound copy of Virgil's *Aeneid*—and beat her furiously about the head with it.

Boys shouted "Oh, sir!" Parents cried "Don't kill the poor beast." One of the TV men yelled "That's enough, General."

Suddenly changing her tactics, Leonora lurched and staggered, her tongue lolling horribly, towards the cameras. She shuddered and twitched convulsively, groaned, suffered another horrible spasm, and in a moment the cameras were focused on a spaniel

which, it was plain to see, was but a distorted corpse.

Weaving through the ruins of his career and reputation, the General returned to London to find Leonora in womanly form in their apartment.

"I told you I was a witch," she said complacently.

"The thing I first thought I heard them say about you was true too," said the General with bitterness.

"Now don't be horrid to me," said Leonora. "Next time I might be a lovable old pussy, your inseparable companion in war and peace. Or perhaps I will just go on being your sweetly good-natured, long-suffering wife, and at the drop of a hat people will criticize you sharply for not being nicer to me."

2 2

"WHY I STOOD FIRM ON THE BOMB—
MACMILLAN"—*Daily Mail*
Knew it wasn't loaded?

Statues for Schools

By H. F. ELLIS

IT seems to be pretty well determined that a little statuary dotted here and there about the school grounds is good for schoolchildren. To grow up in the daily company of works of art cannot fail to broaden and strengthen young minds, at an age when susceptibility to beauty, conscious or unconscious, is at its keenest. So more and more local authorities, aware of their responsibilities, are investing in suitable Groups and Figures.

The only difficulty is that opinions differ about what *is* suitable. If the Education Sub-committee go bald-headed for the Contemporary there is certain to be an outcry the moment the curious masterpieces are established in the playground. The more notably non-representational works are attacked as "meaningless," "an insult" and "a wicked waste of public money." If representationalism rears its ugly head high enough for traces of the human form to be detected, the epithets are "shocking," "obscene" and "not at all the kind of thing I want my two to see." Mothers hold meetings. To eschew modernism and take refuge in the traditional is not much safer either. You might have thought that something soundly classical would pass muster, given a sufficiency of that astounding drapery that clings on for centuries in a position where no bath-towel would hold for a second. But there are snags.

Here, for instance, is Sandwell Secondary Modern School, up in Staffordshire, with five nice new statues representing figures from Greek mythology, to wit Zeus, Pandora, Leda, Icarus and Pan. These are well-known personalities, who have given general satisfaction in marble or composition for

more than two thousand years; nor is there any good reason to suppose that the students of the Birmingham College of Art, who hewed them out on this occasion, were guilty of any indelicacy in detail. But, as Councillor Griffiths of Smethwick points out, that is not the end of the matter; what is to happen, he asks, when the children start demanding to know the stories of these ancient folk?

The Councillor is particularly exercised about the story of Leda and the Swan, "a story of lust and lechery—one of the most salacious in Greek mythology." The pupils, he says, are sure to ask about the statues, and "I for one wouldn't like to retell the stories."

There is certainly something in that. Children are the devil for asking questions and are not easily fobbed off. Imagine being catechized by a ten-year-old about Zeus. To refuse to answer, or worse, to attempt repressive measures (e.g. by ordering the inquisitor to write out one hundred times "I must not ask questions about Leda") is the surest way of stimulating an unhealthy curiosity. It is all very well for Councillor Mrs. Esther Seager, defending the sub-committee's choice of statues, to say that "there are a lot of stories in the Bible that might be considered obscene, and also in Shakespeare." Very true. But it will be time to worry about that when some school starts erecting statues of Lot and Juliet's nurse.

Difficulties of this kind, which make the selection of suitable statues for schools, whether contemporary or classical, such a headache, lead one to hope that educational authorities have taken full advantage of the L.C.C.'s sale of statuary from the Crystal Palace site at Sydenham. Here, as anyone who



has roamed those desolate terraces in recent weeks will agree, is suitability *in excelsis*. Nothing contemporary and meaningless, hardly a trace of obscenity either in presentation or background story mars these patient, crumbling figures. "Valour," "Modesty," "Vigilance" and "Prudence," those noble over-lifesize female statues, could stand unchallenged at the gates of any Secondary Modern in the land. No Councillor, no parent even, could properly object to the massive River and Ocean Gods reclining with easy symbolism on their decent plinths. I for one would gladly answer any questions about "Atlantic" with his genial dolphin, or the splendidly conceived "Nile."

"Sir, please sir, why is the old man leaning against somebody's head with that kind of towel over it?"

"To rest his back, Tommy. Reclining figures cannot recline satisfactorily without support. The head is that of an ancient Egyptian, symbolizing Old Nile. In the same way, the right elbow rests conveniently upon what, if you look closely, you will see to be a crock, or cruse, from which composition water gushes, symbolizing the source of the mighty river. Just as 'Thames' over there by the Biology Lab. reclines upon a bale, symbolizing Trade, so—"

"Sir, sir! 'Thames' has lost his right foot, sir, and 'Nile' hasn't. Would that be because of the crocodile to keep off hyenas, sir?"

"There is no need to get over-excited and hysterical, Diana. The crocodile is indigenous to the Nile and, together with the coconut palm which you will notice clasped in the figure's left hand, completes a grouping rich in Egyptian associations. Turning to 'Amazon' here . . ."

On second thoughts, however, I doubt whether "Amazon" is entirely suitable for schools. She suffers from over-delicacy. Her maker (R. Monti *fecit*, 1854) scrupled to mutilate the lady in accordance with the custom of her remarkable race, and it is noticeable that some later hand (one pictures an irate Herodotean scholar armed with a geological hammer in the Victorian dusk) has attempted to rectify the error. I for one should prefer, if I had the money, to present her to some establishment for maturer minds—perhaps to Oxford, where her flaking beauty would sort well with the Sheldonian.



"I'm Detective-Sergeant Watts, Miss La Flamencurf, and I couldn't help overhearing what you said just now about not having a date to-night."

The Moth

OUT of my trousers, lo! a moth is born.
Wraith-like it rose from its opaque cocoon
And fluttered faintly off, a thing of scorn
Nurtured on wool, a son of pantaloons.

And in my trousers it has left a hole,
An absence, a hiatus and a dearth,
To mark the cloth it ate, the food it stole
To bring its transitory self to birth.

And will it live a day, or live a week?
My trousers were a garb of many years.
Cut to my measure, baggy but unique;
I wore them in the vale of winter tears

And on the flowery mount of summer suns;
They lie in ruins, murdered by the moth.
So gardened Gaul was harried by the Huns,
And Rome's high grandeur ravaged by the Goth.

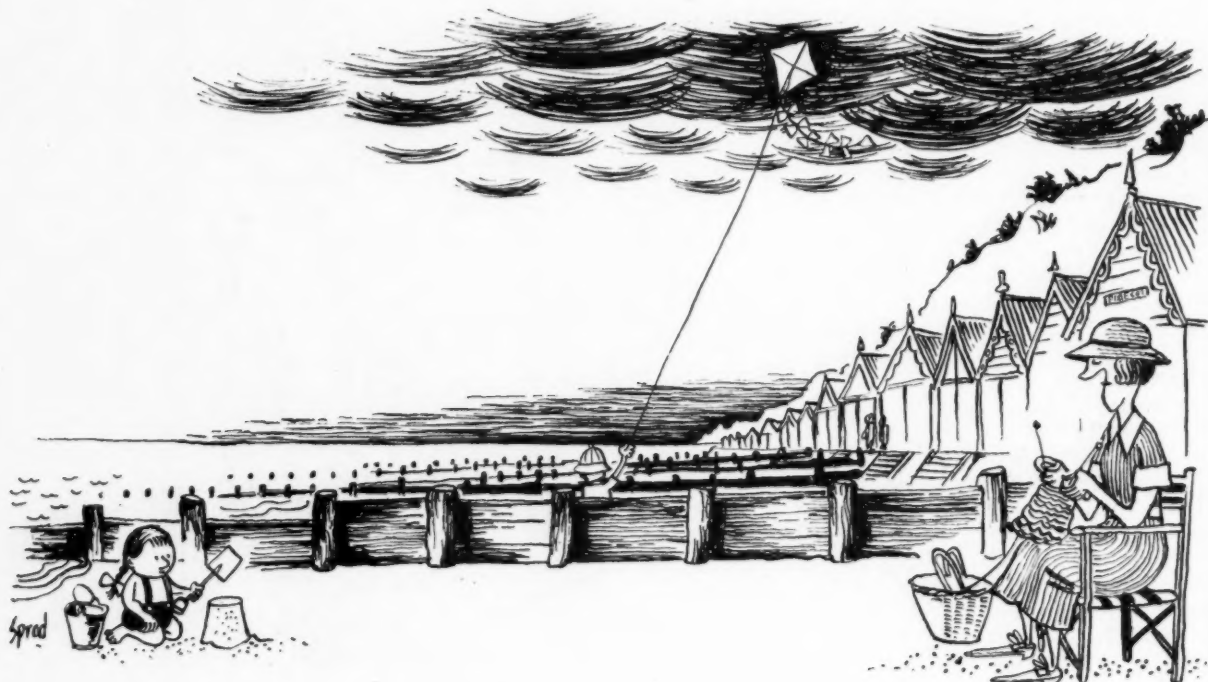
R. P. LISTER

Fabulous Frinton

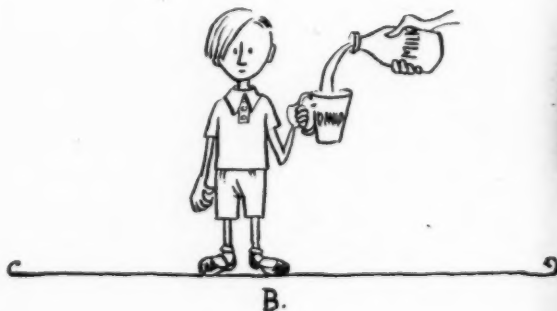
"A QUIET seaside resort
With an Early English Church,"
Says the gazetteer.
And though the entry is short
It shows a bit more research
Than might appear,

For there *are* no pubs in the place,
No fun-fair, peep-show or pier,
No stalls for drinks,
And almost no parking-space;
Only sand. (And, to be fair,
"The famous links.")

And though to its urban zone
For efficient administration
Walton is tacked on,
Frinton stands really alone
In fighting the infiltration
Of Goths from Clacton.



To send your daughter here, though moderate fun
For her while you enjoy the South of France,
Will shield her from too tropical a sun,
Her parents from her too observant glance.



(A) shows the Clacton infant's snacks between
His meals *per diem* in an average week
And (B) the Frinton child's. As can be seen
There is no difference in their physique.

Children whose parents call them "kiddies"
Are always a source of strife;
To do what the Council has forbid is
Part of their Way of Life.

So "kiddies" have to have bubble-gum
And helter-skelter and shops
To reduce the annual damage sum
And keep them clear of the cops.

But Frinton's child considers with pride
His town, how quiet and clean it is,
And is quiet and clean and edified
By the sea-front's subtler amenities.



Faced with the thick barbed-wire
Which, like Brunnhilde's fire,
Circles the town
Hikers retire dismayed.
But, should this barricade
Ever come down,

Could the brave Frinton men
And gentlewomen then
Go on pretending
That any Clacton type
Does in fact want to swipe
What they're defending?

P. D.



And Practice Drives Me Mad

By R. G. G. PRICE

MEDICAL students tend to treat patients on the lines laid down in their lectures and are treated by them as near-doctors, but things are different in Education. Boys, the raw material, who always want everything clear-cut, become fretful when faced by students on teaching practice. Students blur the frontier between the old, who teach, and the young, who are taught. Kindly members of the regular staff sometimes pretend that the young man who sits in a chair making notes of lessons and trying to remember the different kinds of intelligence test, the young man who later sidles on to the stage to take lessons himself, is the real thing; the boys know better. In my very first fortnight a boy asked me straight: "Are you another amateur?" Later I should have been able to deal with his gauche query more cunningly. At the time I simply said "Don't queue sideways," and continued to bustle to and fro in the corridor.

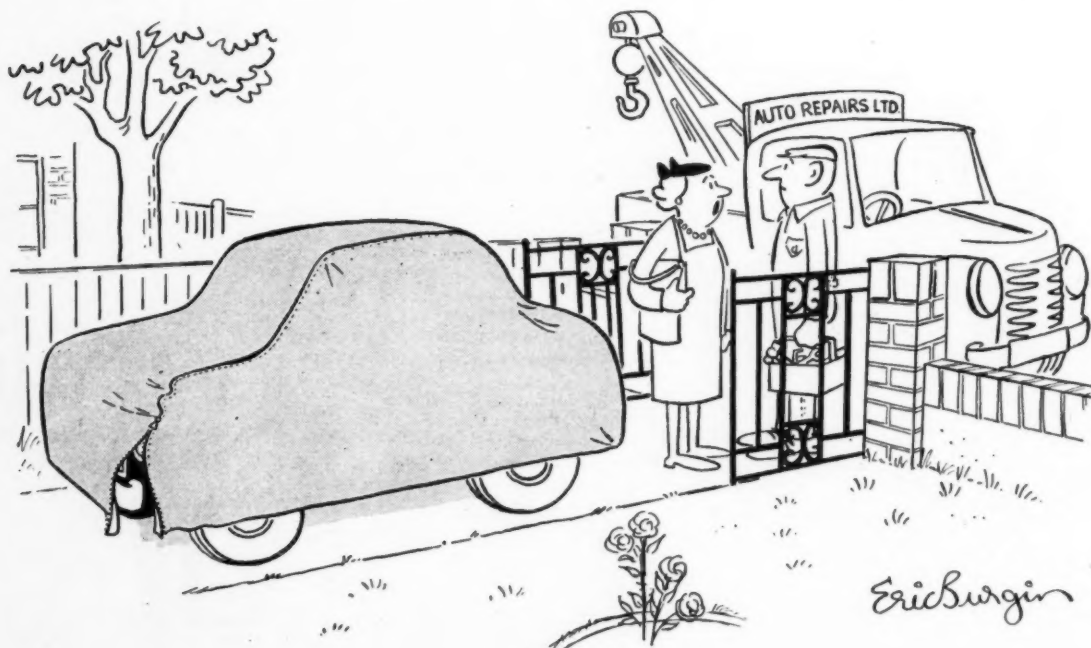
Boys feel that students are still undergoing education but are treacherously siding with authority. They see them

as very old boys who have never made the grade and become Old Boys, and they resent being reproved by them. One advantage of this attitude is that when supervisors arrive to listen, the student is protected by the schoolboy code of honour. My pupils gave me hell when we were alone, but they would never take on themselves the guilt of getting me punished. The form might be playing "dodgems" with their desks while I drew the Battle of Trafalgar on the board. Suddenly the noise would stop and a voice would ask a question about fire-ships—my other turn was the Armada. I would realize that a supervisor had come round the door and my form was determined to see me through. He might be an old, dry man, who simply said a boy should always be addressed by name when asked a question, and said this to all his students on all his visits, or it might be a youngish, academic, non-committal man who never said anything but kept the room quiet, for which I was grateful. Usually it was my tutor, who was sympathetic, sensible and gay. He even hinted, bless him, that he had had sticky moments as

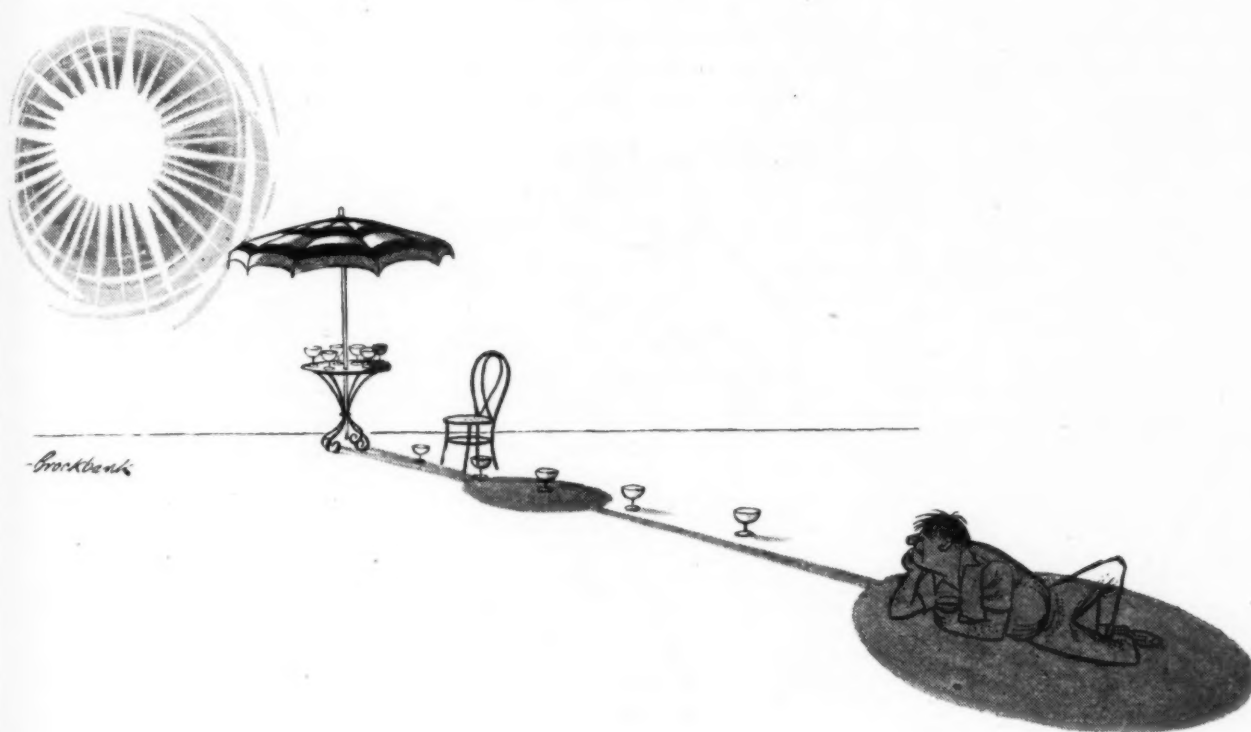
a beginner himself. No wonder he became a professor.

The boys did not realize that the man they saw looking apologetically ferocious on Tuesdays and Thursdays lived quite a different life on the other days of the week, in a stone building which seems, in memory, to have been mainly staircase, like a lighthouse. As the trams outside snouted up into daylight from the Kingsway tunnel, I sat at lectures among brightly-jumpered girls and even clergymen making notes on Spearman's Two-Factor Theory, the Place of Play in Junior Physics, the Hadow Report, or Bulges, a curious topic of post-graduate study, perhaps, but that is what we had lectures on: I am certain of it.

One kind of bulge was an age-group. It was caused by the vivacity of war and you could work out when it was going to overcrowd each rung of the educational ladder. I suppose the bulges we dealt with are latent now but will be emerging to complicate pensions in another quarter of a century. The other kind of bulge was even more diagrammatic and was a method of teaching



"The zipper's jammed."



history. You taught it backwards by tracing a line of development, and when you came to a bit you knew well you were especially thorough and the line bulged out into a kind of balloon, or two-sided bulge. My pupils never guessed that as I tried to down them I was secretly hoping for a break in the turmoil so that I could try out my expertise. They did not see the technician in me. They did not even realize that a few miles nearer the centre of London I engaged in student activities, like being the rain in *Pygmalion*.

It was a curiously compartmentalized life. In lectures I was told to encourage a busy hum, and there was wild talk of bringing the methods of Baden-Powell into the class-room, while in the class-room the master in charge of me advised me to slosh the first boy who gave trouble and quoted a tough bit of advice from Machiavelli. In lectures there was talk of making models of cathedrals and spending a term or so on the history of agriculture. Off Brixton Hill what mattered was making sure they knew pages twenty to twenty-four and

providing some marks for the form order.

My only serious attempt to unite the two halves in which I was being divided was to get a form, with whom I was supposed to read plays, out of their desks into really active drama. Some boys thought this was unprofessional of me and sulked. Some took it to be a rather Mediterranean kind of lesson and wandered about visiting friends or relaxing on top of their desks. I thought enthusiasm would spread to them and lent my gown to add verisimilitude to some Lancashire comedy or other. About half the class joined in vigorously, those without parts insisting they were a Crowd, as in Shakespeare; they cluttered up the scene and often wrung their hands, a gesture which had caught their fancy. My supervisors, instead of whooping me on to indent for crêpe hair, said that as they wanted to send the school students in future years they would prefer me to innovate rather less.

I regret that I never had students watching me once I became a whole-timer myself (as I did), though it is true

that the loudest laugh I ever raised from a form was once when I referred to the fact that I had been trained in teaching. But then, how humiliating it would be to find that your student had the same calming effect on your pupils as a supervisor. Something like this happened to a friend of mine. An enormous student arrived to watch him, a thick-thighed redhead who bulged out over the chair and listened to the first lesson in disapproving silence. At the end of it he said "Now let me get at them. We'll see who's been attending." There was a moment of horrified silence and the redhead turned to the form master and said proudly "That's one thing I've always been able to do, make folk uneasy."

"'And I bet,' said I, 'that you want to be a model girl when all this fun is over.'

"No thank you," said the girl who would make a hit as a model any day. 'I am afraid I am not tough enough—so I am going to try for TV.'—*Evening Standard*

Tell her, someone.



"Hold your fire, chaps, and let's hear what they have to say."

America Day by Day

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

WELL, I see by the papers that the world's heavyweight championship boxing tourney between Floyd Patterson and Hurricane Tommy Jackson, not in itself a very interesting event, was enlivened by the appearance as announcer and master of ceremonies of the eminent Mr. Harry Balogh. The name is probably not familiar to the public of Great Britain, but it means a lot to us over here, for when Mr. Balogh is at the controls there is seldom a dull moment. He has that little something that the others haven't got.

Dan Parker, the sports editor of the *New York Daily Mirror*, has been refreshing my memory with a few reminiscences of Mr. Balogh's big moments in the ring. One of these was on the night of the Carnera-Louis bout in 1935, when—for the Italian-Ethiopian war was on and inter-racial feeling between Italians and negroes ran high—

it was vitally necessary for the announcer to say something that would soothe the angry passions of both sections. Mr. Balogh did.

"Leave us all view this pugilistic encounter without anchor or prejudice," he pleaded.

Asked subsequently by interviewers where he got the word "prejudice," he revealed that it just came to him on the spur of the moment. "But there isn't such a word," they told him. "That's just the pernt," said Mr. Balogh. "I kernered it."

At another championship fight, that between Max Baer and Tony Galento, an attendant climbed up to the apron of the ring just before the proceedings were about to begin and handed him a note. Having read it, Mr. Balogh called for the microphone to be lowered and, grasping it firmly, said:

"Ladeez 'n' gennulmen, leave me beg

your indulgence and crave your attention for just a moment. If John Doakes of Garden City, Long Island, is in the house, I have an important message for him. John, your poor old father is on his death bed and won't last the night. There's a pay station phone in the office, John. Why not call your father and pay your last respects to the dear old man and then come back and enjoy the fight with a clear conscience?"

The story brings to mind something that happened at the Mark Hellinger Theatre a week or two ago while the audience were waiting for the curtain to go up on *My Fair Lady*. To the amazement of one and all there was an empty seat in the orchestra stalls. But the mystery was soon solved. The lady in the adjoining seat explained to her neighbours that her husband should have been sitting there, but he had unfortunately died on the previous

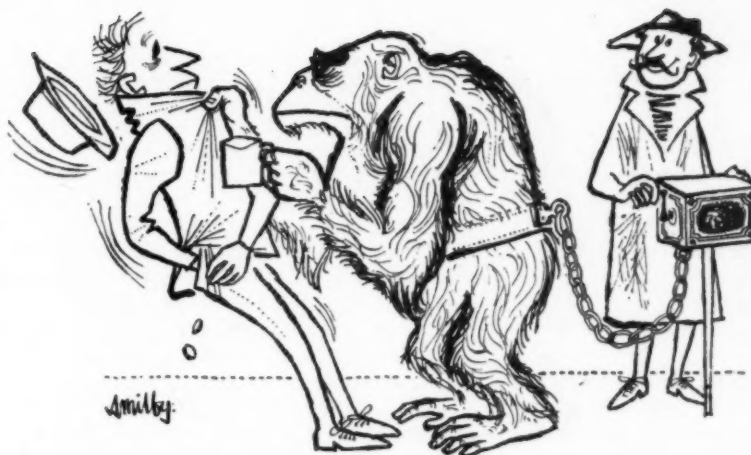
Monday and she had not been able find anyone to take his place because all his friends were at the funeral.

A sharp lesson has been given to the bad characters in novels of suspense who for years have been letting themselves fall into the habit of taunting people, generally out of the side of their mouths. One has noticed this weakness in them again and again. They get the private eye tied up in the underground cellar and are all set to dispatch him with knife or gun, in whichever direction their tastes lie, and they waste precious moments sneering and jeering at him, with of course the result that before they can get down to business the rescue party arrives and all's to do again.

Let them take warning from what happened to Sylvester Tolliver (20) of Newark, N.J., who recently burgled the premises of the J. J. Ross Co., manufacturers of machinery supplies. He could have cleaned up to the extent of \$4.20, two pairs of trousers and a shirt and made a smooth getaway, but he had to be clever and start taunting. He left a note in which he joshed and kidded J. J. Ross and his Co. for not having had the sense to install burglar alarms, signing it "Mr. X." He also mentioned in passing that he was unemployed. Well, you don't have to give Detectives George Farley and Bernard Betz more than that to go on. They made the rounds of the employment agencies, checked handwriting, matched the note up with Sylvester's application for a job and scooped him in.

John Crosby, the critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, has drawn attention to a sinister trend in television. He warns the viewing public to take to the hills because after the adult (or neurotic) Western it is going to get the poetic Western, in which no shots are fired and all the characters talk like transplanted Irishmen from those Celtic mist plays. He quotes from a television drama called *Fire and Ice* a speech which certainly suggests that there are tough times in store, should the movement spread.

"You see, Jeff," a mother says to her son, "your Pa has got a terrible big dream in him and he's got to talk to someone who'll believe in him. He wants to turn this pile of rocks into a proud thing."



And, as if this were not bad enough, Sylvania Electric Products Inc. have just invented a gadget—no use describing it to you, it would be right over your heads: all that stuff about phosphor-coated lamps and electroluminescent panels and mobile dots of light—which will enable every wall in a house to be turned into a television screen. At the thought of what life will be like with "What's My Line?" going on simultaneously in the dining room, drawing room, father's den, all the bedrooms and the usual domestic offices, imagination, to kern a phrase, boggles.

'This is being a lovely summer over here and nothing, as the song says, but blue skies—and one would be feeling

completely bumps-a-daisy were it not for the occasional human tragedies that force themselves on one's notice and remind one that existence is far from being all jam for everyone. I am thinking at the moment of Police Officer Walter R. Finigan of Dallas, Texas, who has just put in the following report to his superiors:

"Officer was in the process of waking a passenger on city bus when subject suddenly bit officer on left finger."

Not to mention this poignant advertisement in the Situation Wanted section of a carnival magazine:

"Wire trapeze artist who dangles three partners by teeth seeks non-professional job for summer months. Has hay fever."

Reserve

"Indian Princes Faced with Extinction"—The Times

HERE the sun never sets. At stated hours
Arc lamps awake the pitiless eastern day
And captive kings with inapplicable powers
Climb on gilt gaddis and resume their sway.

A time-switch brings mysterious eastern night,
Recorded conches and the distant drum.
The jackal howls. Synthetic factions fight.
Orgies are imitated. The rains come.

See, against sound-effects in quarter-tones,
Suttee and thuggee, culture mixed with crime,
Western adventurers behind the thrones
And Patiala pegs at feeding-time:

And through the chequer-board of nights and days
The graceful creatures, robed and puggareed,
Act out for ever in the public gaze
The natural habits of their royal breed.

P. M. HUBBARD

It Begins at Home

By PETER DICKINSON

THE legal aspects of the Agaga Case have been spoken of by a lawyer as "hideous"; the facts, on the other hand, are as follows:

In 1950 there was a minor international dispute about Angkati, an unproductive tract of Central Africa whose inhabitants are few and nasty. Each of the countries concerned insisted that one of the others was responsible for it. Nothing happened to prevent the B.B.C. from sending out a team to do a feature on Angkati and, inevitably, on the agaga, which is a small local rodent, earless, tail-less and very prolific. It has to be as it provides the Angkati with their livelihood, economic structure and religion; they use it for food, clothing, bow-strings, needles, thread and currency (2,000 agaga-teeth are worth about one shilling). In addition to this each

agaga is thought to represent the soul of a dead enemy returned to gnaw away at the soul of the hereditary ruler of Angkati, the Auf. To persuade the dead soul not to try it again each agaga is killed with a ritual of extreme unpleasantness.

Early in 1951 the Life of the Angkati gleamed on to the screens in five million parlours in Great Britain. With it, owing to a lapse in censorship at Lime Grove, gleamed the death of the agaga. Five million British parlours were understandably perturbed, and the Save the Agaga Fund blazed into existence. A publicity expert was hired, on a percentage basis, and by Easter enormous agaga, drawn to look cuddly, burgeoned on all the bill-boards in England. The Fund, helped by quarantine regulations which forbade

the import of any real agaga, grew to six figures. A glossy fact-finding expedition was mounted to survey the problem, zoologists, ethnologists, ecologists, track-laying transport, air-conditioned caravans, camels, film units, bearers and an interpreter. Within a year it was winding its way through illimitable wastes of Central African scrub towards Angkati, but, as the events of 1950 had converted the Auf to an extreme isolationist, no one in fact ever saw a single agaga. The expedition returned to England and the S.A.F. found themselves with nothing to spend their money on but more publicity.

At this point they received a letter from the S.R.R.A. The Society for the Rehabilitation of Rodents in Angkati had been founded in 1894 by Lady Isobel Furness, who came to Angkati



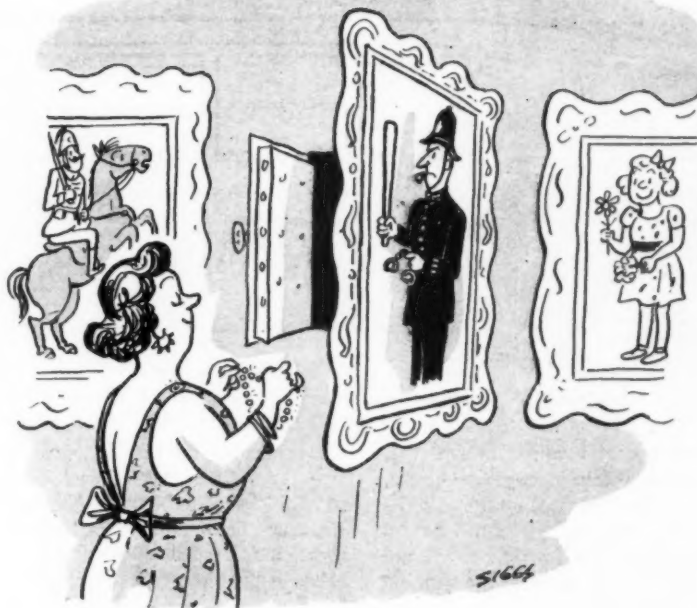
"Checked everything? Missiles? Anti-missile missiles? Anti-anti-missile missiles?"

while pursuing her own ideas about the Cape-to-Cairo road. She spent some weeks trying to convince the then Auf that his subjects were being unchristian towards the agaga, but made no headway as he was selfishly concerned about having his soul eroded. When she took herself off he vowed himself and his heirs under an eternal obligation to her and hers. The Angkati are proverbially improvident.

When Lady Isobel returned to England she caught scarlet fever at a séance and died. On her death-bed she heard one of her heirs speak slightly of Madam Blavatsky so she altered her will and left the whole of her fortune to help the agaga. All she was concerned with was preventing the Angkati from killing the agaga in the particular way they did, but she did not make this clear and after she died the S.R.R.A. was formed to prevent them killing the agaga at all. Lady Isobel was not, in fact, a rich woman and the Society seldom had enough income to do much. After two world wars it could usually pay the rent of an office off Victoria Street, the secretary's salary and the cost of an annual wreath on Lady Isobel's tomb.

But the S.R.R.A. still maintained the connection with the Auf of Angkati. It was clearly Lady Isobel's heir, and the present Auf had to some extent repaid his ancestral debt; when he was up at King's he had called at the S.R.R.A. office in his purple college scarf and stayed talking to the secretary until nine o'clock; she had not cared for him much but now she felt that his visit proved that the S.R.R.A. still had the contacts even if they lacked the money, so she wrote to the secretary of the S.A.F. suggesting that they should make a united effort. The S.A.F., still tender after the result of their expedition, could only feel that this was an attempt to muscle in on their splendid achievement; it drove them, if anything, to further depths of publicity. Their agaga Christmas cards, for instance, were sold out by the end of October. The Fund swelled uncontrollably.

The two societies continued to correspond; their dispute never actually broke into the papers, which was a good thing as the public expects Charities to be charitable, but the committee of the S.A.F. made the mistake of feeling that their position was impregnable and allowed such a note of contempt to



become apparent in their letters that the S.R.R.A. was stung to mobilizing its forgotten reserves. Lady Isobel's ramified relationships had reached into every cranny of the Establishment, though nobody called it that then; mostly her kin had felt more comfortable when she was on some other continent, but their drabber descendants seemed to be subconsciously aware that such an exotic near-ancestor suggested that they too might have something in them somewhere. So, gradually, the huge tide of nobbery began to move silently against the S.A.F.: a marchioness was aloof with one committee member; an actress was unnecessarily polite to the wife of another; an archbishop spoke blandly round the subject to the chairman, never mentioned the dispute, but left him feeling thoughtful. Finally, after an angry meeting, the S.A.F. gave in, only insisting, when the merger was agreed by which the Society for the Rehabilitation of Agaga was formed, on complicated safeguards to prevent their funds being spent on anything except the actual welfare of agaga.

The 1955 expedition, even more elaborate than that of 1952, found the Auf ready to honour his hereditary commitments and eager to talk about oil, which he was convinced lay abundantly beneath his arid acres, so they were able to settle quietly in. Three weeks after they had begun their preliminary

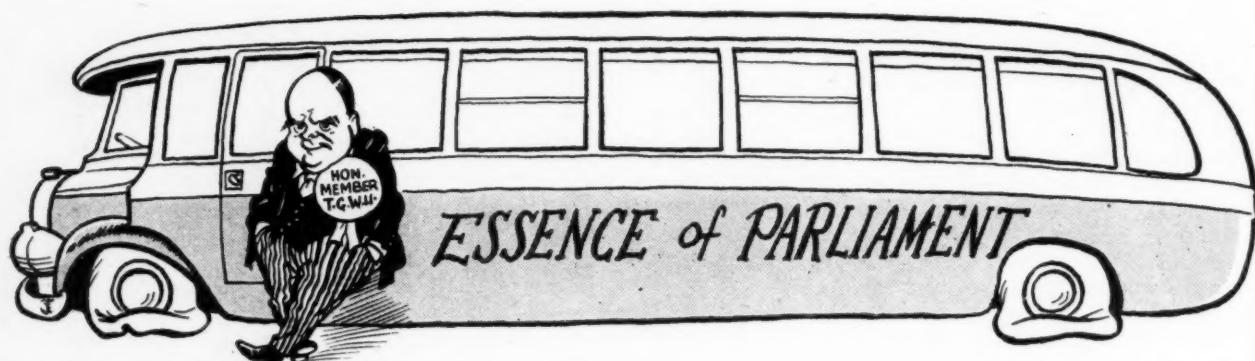
survey of the problem one of the helicopter-pilots went down with mumps. The simple Angkati are always ready to laugh at the sufferings of any of their fellows and the disease spread very rapidly, since the first case in every village was immediately surrounded by all the other villagers jostling round for a better view. As a matter of fact very few of the natives perished, but within a month there was not an agaga left in the land.

The Agaga Case, referred to at the beginning of this article (though it includes the claims of toy-manufacturers left with 400,000 unsaleable agaga toys on their hands) is mainly concerned with whether the S.R.A. can apply its funds, safeguarded so that they should only be spent on rescuing the agaga from the Angkati, to rescuing the Angkati from starvation.

Song of St. Stephen's

IN Westminster's city
Where M.P.s wax witty
One factor is constant though cranks
come and go;
We get Gerald Nabarro
Like a perky cock sparrow
Crying "Coal Board's all flummoxed!
Resign! Resign!" ("Oh!")

F. L. M.



The Minister of Labour

IT sometimes happens in real life, and more often in magazine stories, that a team turns up to play its match one man short and that a spectator is picked up on the ground who then proceeds to score the winning try, or, as an unknown demon bowler, to take ten wickets for eight runs. Until Mr. Vosper's illness the under-secretarial performance of Mr. Vaughan-Morgan had not been widely noted. Now at Question Time he goes from strength to strength. After a competent but serious performance on smoking in the previous week, he has now settled down as an avuncular schoolmaster to whom the world is his oyster and the House his class. He distributes his magisterial jokes with the utmost good humour. He tells hon. Members that if any of

them should get Asian 'flu then he will give them "the best clinical advice," which is "to go to bed." When Colonel Bromley Davenport, the Stentor of Knutsford, talks about "caponized chickens," Mr. Vaughan-Morgan, happily varying the stereotyped formula of acknowledgment, says that he is sure that "the whole human race" will take note of what his honourable friend is saying.

The House this week has spent a large part of its time deciding that there is little chance of an international agreement on disarmament and a good deal of the rest of it in arguing about the measures of disarmament that the Government is, in fact, carrying through. Other countries are also carrying through measures of disarmament on their own. The truth seems to be that face to face with one another the governments can never find a formula which they can all accept, but that, when the others are not looking, each one of them is apt to sneak off on his own and do a spot of disarming for economy's sake. The natural conclusion—and is it an unjust one?—is that the main real obstacle to disarmament is the Disarmament Conference. There were in the debate quite a lot of good speeches, each Member trotting out his own particular plan. But, alas, each plan was quite different from the next.

Lady Megan Lloyd George, playing for the first time in her new jersey, thought that the country was getting impatient with the Government, but Mr. Bevan, who was in cynical, mellow and philosophic mood, put the point more generally and more justly when he said "Let us face it—most of the speeches on both sides of the House

make no sense at all to ordinary men and women."

Mr. Bevan has thought of a new joke. It is just to read out what Mr. Selwyn Lloyd has said without comment and then wait for the laugh. It worked all right and he got his laugh, but surely with Front-Bench speeches once is enough. What made the debate insufferably tedious was that no one believes that either side in the Conference is doing more than manœuvring for position, or that anything said in the House of Commons is likely to persuade them to do any more. The Russians are always ready with their proposals whenever they are sure that they will not be accepted. It is indeed of some importance that we should not allow ourselves to appear in the wrong. But it is all of secondary importance. As Sir Winston Churchill once said about cancer: "What is needed is not a majority but a remedy."

The Speaker is only allowed to accept a motion for the adjournment of the House on an urgent matter of public importance if the matter is so important that it must be debated and so urgent that the evil will be past remedy if Members wait for the first normal opportunity for the debate. The Speaker argued on Monday that Members who wanted to talk about Oman could do so in the disarmament debate on Tuesday, and he seemed well justified in having refused to accept the adjournment on Monday when Tuesday came and very few Members seemed even then anxious to take their Oman opportunity.

Yet all this was not good enough for Mr. Wedgwood Benn, and he has put down a motion of censure on the Speaker. Speaker-baiting is a hereditary



"Most of the speeches on both sides make no sense at all to ordinary men and women."

Mr. Bevan

sport with the little Benns. On the Day of Judgment all else will be forgiven to Lord Stansgate because of his denunciation of an erring Minister with "There he stands with his drawn salary in his hand," but the House did not seem to be much in the mood to take this latest Bennery very seriously. "I have no objection to that at all," said the Speaker when informed of the motion of censure upon him, and a titter went round the benches as if it was all excellently funny.

The most interesting controversies in Parliament these days are, as I have already said, its æsthetic controversies, for at least then there is real doubt who will be on which side. For myself I am all for Anthony Greenwood and against the Brown-Duncan axis, which would not have Epstein doing the statue of Lloyd George. Either we take art seriously or we do not. If we do not take it seriously it would be much best just to put up a notice and say "Here was Lloyd George." There is surely nothing whatsoever to be said for adding one more to that dreary company of petrified politicians decked up to look like Roman emperors. Epstein like the rest of us may, as Mr. Molson hinted, have his off days, but at least there is a serious artistic opinion that he is one of our greatest sculptors. I am on his side against Philistia.

But it is far less easy to know on which side to be in Lord Blackford's protest against the high hotel in Park Lane. Surely the real trouble there is that there are so many people. Lord Blackford's argument about the dwarfing of St. Paul's by a vulgar and secular building is in itself a good argument.

But if we do not build high then we must reconcile ourselves to suburbia stretching out for a hundred miles before we can "find the place where London ends and England can begin."

However much the Opposition of the day may disapprove of the Secretary for Scotland of the day, he is of all the Members of the Government the one least likely to be voted against, for if there were going to be divisions then English Members would have to stay at Westminster all through a Scottish day, and that is something that could not decently be asked of the strongest Englishman. On Wednesday the Englishmen came in their glad rags for Question Time and then legged it as fast as they could for the Royal Garden Party. I found two of Mr. Woodburn's Socialist colleagues preferring the company of the ducks in St. James's Park to Mr. Woodburn's oratory. As a matter of fact they missed a bit. What between Mr. Woodburn pleading that Scottish women should be fatter and Mrs. Mann giving up smoking all over again there was quite a laugh or two before the day was through.

On Thursday at Question Time the House jobbed back to Oman, and Mr. Bevan, deserting the philosophic role, spoke of Members opposite getting black eyes. Nobody really doubts that arms have been infiltrated by Saudi Arabia over the Oman frontier, but one can share with Mr. Bevan a wish that Mr. Selwyn Lloyd would be able to find out a little more about it. Without such evidence it is hard to answer the point, obviously false as it is, that in intervening in an internal dispute we are doing just what the Russians did in Hungary.

It had looked all through the early part of the week as if both Front Benches were going to duck saying anything definite about strikers' violence. But on Thursday both Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Gaitskell did their stuff on this. Yet the economic debate which followed was almost pure buffoonery, rising to a crescendo at the end. Mr. Thorneycroft bravely declared war on rising wages and prices. "This means adopting on occasion the old-fashioned policy of saying No," he announced. As at that very moment the busmen were being awarded an increase of 11/- and the Steel Board was putting up its prices by



Mr. Duncan Sandys

7½ per cent, one wondered "on what occasion?"

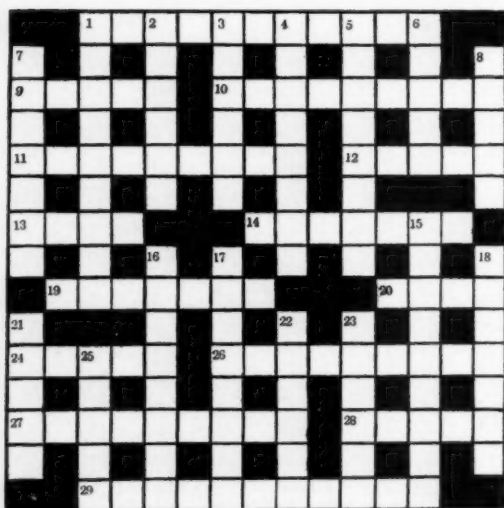
Comedy became pure farce at the end when as Mr. Macmillan was saying "There has never been such a good time," in strode Socialist Mr. Hector Hughes in faultless evening dress looking just like an Edwardian knut. Inflation must have gone to town in a big way when even Aberdeen must have its Burlington Bertie, and other Members realized that for the future they must bend all their energies to the task of keeping up with the Hugheses. The only appropriate comment was that of Mr. Martin Lindsay, who protested by abstention against any attempt to infuse into such an occasion an act even so remotely connected with the real world as that of proceeding to a division.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





Limerick Crossword



Said a sadhearted grandsire of 9 ac. (5)
 As hard on his crutches he 12 ac. (5)
 "From my ears hair's 8 dn. (5),
 All my paths 5 dn. (8),
 And my light, just like Milton's, 18 dn. (2, 5)."

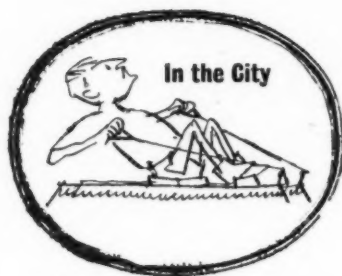
NOTE.—This puzzle contains half as many clues as 10 ac. (4, 5). It has 19 ac. (7) the function of Lear, running to limericks, and the composer—no 23 dn. (6)—has 22 dn. (6) many times in pursuing his 28 ac. (5) of thought. None of the limericks is risqué, such as the one about the young lady named 25 dn. (5), nor is much early historical or chemical research required into such characters as 24 ac. (5) or such preparations as 17 dn. (8) sulphate. If any 27 ac. (9) turn and complain that some of the rhymes are rough, as they are, let them try to get four sets of limerick endings in a fifteen-square frame. The stage is set: 26 ac. (7, 2).

A witch, on vacation at 1 ac. (11),
 Beshrewed a rude moorland deer 11 ac. (9)
 Who called her "7 dn. (7)."
 Though asleep and 13 ac. (4),
 The hag woke crying "29 ac. (11)!"

An exuberant man of 1 dn. (9)
 Grew exultant when winning at 21 dn. (5)
 He sang "15 dn. (1, 4, 4)"
 And shouted "6 dn. (5)!"
 It's mate in two moves, more or 20 ac. (4)."

Just demobbed, by the cool 4 dn. (5, 3),
 A Devonian, who'd fished it 3 dn. (6),
 Thought, "No schism, no 14 ac. (7),
 I'm no longer in 2 dn. (6),
 How far away seems the 16 dn. (5, 3)."

Solution next week



"Industry and Society"

THE Labour Party's new statement on public ownership—the work of a committee led by James Griffiths and starring Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan—has been given a very rough handling by the Press. That was only to be expected. What is disappointing and disturbing is that the popular dailies have devoted so much of their precious space to vituperation and cant that they have been unable to reproduce more than a line or two of the document and have left their readers groping helplessly to find what all the fuss is about.

"Industry and Society" states that a Labour Government might become an investor in private enterprise, that it would buy equities "at full market values"—"we would emphasize, however, that it is not our intention that the Government should indulge in a wildly inflationary scramble for shares; both the timing and occasion for acquiring shares will need careful consideration."

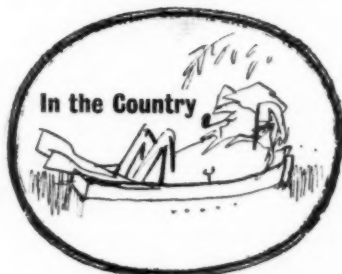
It is mentioned *en passant* that the funds for such investment might be found in the surpluses to be enjoyed by Labour's proposed scheme of national superannuation, and the leader-writers, fastening on to this juicy item, have made the pips squeak of outrage and perfidy. The Socialists, says the *Daily Mail*, would "employ money belonging to shareholders to deprive them of their shares. They would use Conservatives' contributions to socialize everything. That would be a shameful misuse of public funds."

So it would. But does anyone really believe that a Labour Government would limit its investments to the scope of surplus pension funds? Inflation is so much simpler. Since the war governments of Left and Right have not hesitated to print new money and create new credit whenever they have found the going tough and more respectable economic measures less expedient. They have become experts at passing the buck. And I have not the slightest doubt that a Labour Government

interested in the equities of Shell, Unilever or Imperial Chemicals would raise the wind without much trouble. What are Treasury Bills for anyway?

I can see Mr. Bevan (or Mr. Griffiths) setting out to do his morning shopping at the Stock Exchange. He is armed with the necessary cash and the market has been softened up by a string of ministerial announcements and inspired rumours. What an entrance! What's he up to to-day, eh? Stores, d'you think? Or will it be electricals?

It is amazing that the ideas men of the Left (Evan Durbin can no longer take the blame) should contemplate such folly. If they dislike and distrust private enterprise they should invent a workable alternative system of production. If they have nothing to put in its place (have they tired of nationalization?) they should at least allow



The Sacred Cow

IF every other factory in England suddenly became obsessed by the idea of manufacturing radio sets or scooters, nobody would be surprised if the price of these objects were to fall. The most obtuse industrialist would, using his business acumen, anticipate the over-production of scooters and begin manufacturing prams or tiddly-winks. Industry seems to have some flexibility about it; industrialists have a large range of choice; they are prepared to make anything from garden forks to jet aircraft. But it is not so in agriculture.

Farmers suffer from fixed ideas. They are obsessed with growing oats, barley and wheat; they don't seem to have heard of any animals other than cows, pigs or chickens. Perhaps the whole of agriculture needs psycho-analysing? It is quite obvious that we farmers are as mad as hatters. Here we are with a fabulous surplus of milk. The Milk Marketing Board is doing its best by pouring thousands of gallons into quarries in order to maintain the price. Yet the farms' response to this economic fact is to grow more silage to rear more cows to produce more milk. In spite of this perversity they will be shocked when

private enterprise to remain private and enterprising.

Private investment would become farcical if the ordinary investor had to compete with the government broker and his inside knowledge of legislation to come. The Stock Exchange would cease to function as a free market and would daily enact a cynical game of follow-my-leader. And new capital—if anyone still cared to save—would hop about at the end of strings of political intrigue.

There is much in "Industry and Society" that makes sense. A public investment board may in the long run be the only way of giving the small saver a stake in inflation, but it must be entirely free from Treasury control and political patronage. Labour must realize that it cannot have its Stock Exchange and eat it.

MAMMON

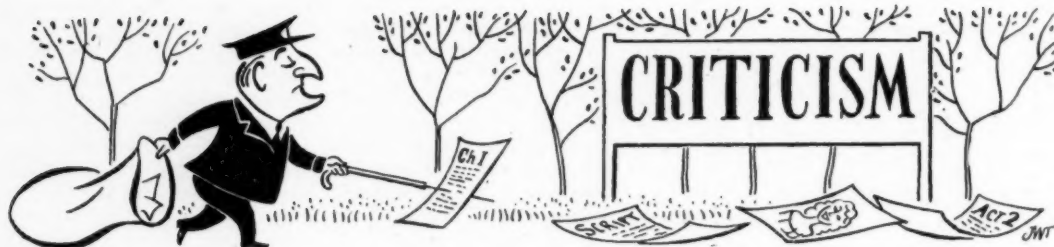
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the price per gallon falls. It is the same with eggs, bacon and pork. We are over-producing these commodities already, yet any new farmer immediately applies himself to producing eggs, bacon and pork. In industry such insanity would not be tolerated. But in agriculture we think we should be indulged in our neurotic obsession for milking cows and feeding pigs.

If anybody will consult Farmer Noah, he will discover that the Ark contained other domestic animals besides cows, pigs, sheep and chicken. It is not true that those are the only profitable or edible beasts. There isn't a single farm in England producing *foie gras*. I don't believe it wouldn't pay at least three dairy farmers to turn over to forced feeding of a flock of geese. There are no more than half a dozen trout farmers in England. We import trout from Holland and goose liver from Périgueux. There's a mink farm at Yeovil and Her Majesty has established another in Lancashire. I know of a pheasant farm outside Oxford. Couldn't one or two of our pigmaniacs be adjusted to lead happy and useful lives by keeping woodcock, hares or even larks for their tongues? I've just seen garlic in a shop priced at 1/- per lump because it has had to be ferried from Spain. The English farmer who couldn't grow garlic if he tried couldn't even grow a beard.

There is a whole range of things we could produce and rear if we had more imagination than gate-posts. As things are, our morbid fixation with udders is going to cost us rather dear.

RONALD DUNCAN



BOOKING OFFICE

Flowers, Good and Evil

Baudelaire. Enid Starkie. *Faber*, 50/-

THIS year is the centenary of the judicial condemnation by the French courts of *Les Fleurs du Mal* for obscenity. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* had been similarly proscribed only a few months earlier. When the French are silly in that particular way we in this country can enjoy all the smug pleasure of persons whose public reputation for tipping is so bad that they have nothing to lose, watching a very respectable friend unexpectedly involved in a drunken fracas. This official ban on Baudelaire's poems in their original form lasted until 1949; though methods were naturally found of getting round it.

When Miss Enid Starkie's biography, now largely recast, first appeared nearly twenty years ago, I remember the late Constant Lambert—not without his own Baudelairean side—saying: "It sounds the sort of book that says what Baudelaire really liked was having a tidy desk and knowing where all his papers were kept."

Without suggesting that this was in any way a just estimate of Miss Starkie's herculean labours and discriminating scholarship, the words do at the same time contain an element of truth. Miss Starkie is so determined that the satanic, absinthe-drinking, opium-smoking, brothel-creeping Baudelaire should be banished for ever that one even begins to wonder whether Baudelaire, as a man, was not perhaps a bit of a bore. The fact is that much of the poet's behaviour was admissible if thought of in the old, out-of-date terms, but decidedly less easy to condone if we have to accept him as a latter-day saint. It is hard to be at once fair to Baudelaire and fair to Miss Starkie.

Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) was not only one of the three or four great French poets of the nineteenth century—some judge him the greatest—he was also an acute and original thinker. If he had never composed a line of verse his art criticism alone would make him

a writer apart. He was also one of the first to prophesy disastrous consequences from the teachings of Rousseau in the modern world. His whole approach was new, heralding the Impressionists on the one hand and, on the other, laying the foundations of a whole edifice of modern writing. He is a tremendous figure. How best can his genius be chronicled?



Miss Starkie—who writes almost with the fervour of a close relation—chooses the method of showing everyone in the best possible light: Baudelaire himself, always trying to do better, "but nothing could cure him of his habit of day-dreaming": his mother, long suffering when harassed by her son's inability to earn a living and complete lack of money-sense: her second husband, General Aupick (who now turns out to be of Irish origin), a soldier and ambassador of iron integrity, completely at sea with a poet for a stepson: Monsieur Ancelle, the lawyer (who presided over the family council which took Baudelaire's remaining capital out of his control), were kindly, if obtuse: even the mulatto mistress, Jeanne Duval, companion on and off for nineteen years, in spite of her deplorable behaviour scarcely receives a harsh word. (This odious woman made Baudelaire get rid of his cat.)

We must, of course, be grateful that General Aupick and Ancelle, who

might so easily be butchered to make an intellectual's holiday, in fact receive their due for what they had to put up with. At the same time this universal benevolence does in the end lead to a certain cloying of atmosphere. If all these people were trying so hard to be good, why was the result so disastrous? Miss Starkie does not even allow psycho-analysis to offer a helping hand, sternly repressing any talk of an Oedipus complex, and rapping Monsieur Laforgue's knuckles for mentioning the word masochism.

Not for a moment does one attempt to deny that all Miss Starkie has to say is true, nor that it needed to be said. The fact remains that something of Baudelaire seems missing. To explain that he was misunderstood does not quite suffice. One hesitates to agree with Miss Starkie that all might have been well had he received "proctorial and tutorial supervision" at Oxford or Cambridge. An uneasy feeling persists that the biography might have made the poet himself rather cross. Perhaps this is ungrateful to a book that covers the ground so thoroughly.

There was, by the way, a wine shop in the Rue de Rivoli where English servants from the big hotels would congregate, and, during his enthusiasm for Poe, Baudelaire used to go there to learn English and be shown *Punch*.

ANTHONY POWELL

Unacademic Critic

The Fine Art of Reading. David Cecil. Constable, 18/-

This is a collection of literary essays, including Lord David's Oxford Inaugural Lecture, his Rede Lecture on Pater and his Ballard Mathews Lectures on Conrad. His approach is uncompromisingly æsthetic. Literature exists to delight, though the delight may have to be won. Firmly unacademic and, at the time of delivery, firmly unfashionable, the Inaugural Lecture will appeal to readers who have been feeling lately that most critics address one another rather than assist the common reader.

Lord David is more original in small

things than big, and some of his observations on particular passages in particular books have more force than his discussions of general themes, which are amiable but not strikingly novel or penetrating. He is observant on Jane Austen, and enthusiastically at home in communicating his uncomplicated delight in "Some Women Letter-Writers"; but the book lacks character, compared with his biography of Melbourne, perhaps because, while his imagination is fired by Shakespearean Comedy or The Prose Tales of Walter de la Mare, it is not fired by the idea of lecturing on them. R. G. G. P.

The Hireling. L. P. Hartley. Hamish Hamilton, 13/6

Leadbitter, an ex-regular-army warrant officer turned hire-car driver, tough, isolated, proud and cryptic-sentimental, becomes gradually captivated by a young, titled woman-customer, wealthy, widowed, and equally lonely, whom he beguiles with tales of a fictitious wife and family. Lady Franklin, naïve, romantic, garrulous and physically unawakened until Leadbitter mistakenly makes love to her, falls victim to a predatory young painter who plans to continue his present liaison after marriage. Leadbitter also drives artist and "bohemian" mistress about, and eavesdrops with tragic results. This ingenious central situation, which might have formed a successful basis for collaboration between Graham Greene and Elizabeth Bowen, seems unsuited to Mr. Hartley—essentially a period writer lacking the contemporaneous sense possessed by these confrères. Except for Leadbitter, who by comparison is surprisingly well done, his characters are somewhat nebulous Edwardian abstractions, and Lady Franklin, familiar with Blake yet unable to find her place in a book without a marker, never wholly comes to life. J. M.-R.

Pegasus and Other Poems. C. Day Lewis. Cape, 10/6

Mr. Day Lewis's new poems are divided into three distinct groups: poems retelling a number of classical legends, poems on general themes varying from the atom bomb to George Meredith, and personal poems. The most successful of them employ a technique of direct, unsentimental understatement reminiscent of Hardy, although without Hardy's irony. "The House Where I Was Born," other family poems, "Christmas Eve" and "Lot 96" have this kind of clipped, attractive simplicity. A fine poem about Meredith is also a penetrating exercise in biography, and there are other neatly Hardy-esque poems in the second group. The poems on legendary themes are upon the whole failures. Versification adds little to the prose legends and the themes give room for the lushness that is always springing up in this poet's work. "Lay on his heart a

flower he never knew—the rose called Peace," from another poem, is a typical example. The pieces in which lushness has been sternly kept under are among the best Mr. Day Lewis has written in recent years. J. S.

The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. Evelyn Waugh. Chapman and Hall, 12/6

Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* is the book that comes to mind in attempting to express the many qualities of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's latest—perhaps the best thing he has ever written. Yet the Ettrick Shepherd's horrifying novel never rouses a smile; while Pinfold frequently prostrates the reader with laughter, even when himself transfixed with pity and terror. The story (a *conte* about the length of *The Loved One*) does no more than describe the hallucinations of Mr. Pinfold during a cruise to Ceylon: a mental state based on the author's similar experience at a period of high nervous tension. Faultless technique and the logic of its symbolism throw a tremendous net. We are given a striking portrait of the hero, and a whole gallery of moods of despair. Strongly recommended to all who want to be amused, stimulated and terrified. A. P.

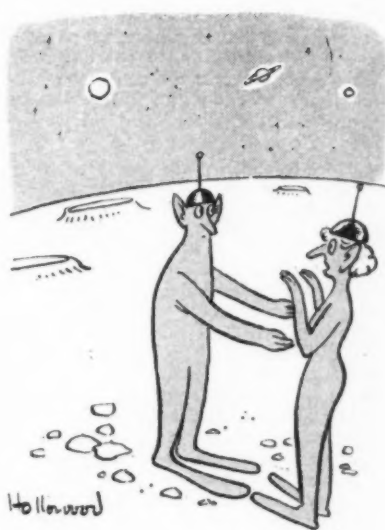
The Medlars. Herbert Silvette. Christopher Johnson, 13/6

Its author (a distinguished American biochemist) calls this novel "a parody of the Third Book of Rabelais," but there is little of the original in the parody but a certain bawdiness. Anthony Medlar is a Communist salesman who acquires a uranium mine but gives it up on principle; his wife Debbie is a dumb blonde (speechless, not stupid) who gives up her husband from lack of principle. The subsidiary characters recall the jokes in *Esquire*. The humour is slapstick, the dominant influence more likely Thorne Smith than Rabelais, but with a strong, rather naïve, dash of politics. As an example of the kind of folk-comedy to spring from the current political climate of the U.S.A. it is interesting. B. A. Y.

Easter Island. Alfred Métraux. Andre Deutsch, 21/-

Nearly a century ago the old life of Easter Island ended, sapped by tribal wars and dealt a series of knock-out blows by white invaders. The present inhabitants drag on in poverty, playing foxtrots while they make bazaar curios; their inspired ancestors who carved the great statues and the wooden tablets now only a folk-memory. Why these bothered and where they came from have long been mysteries out of which archaeologists have hatched wildly conflicting theories. This book, strangely delayed, is the fruit of the Franco-Belgian expedition of 1934.

Dr. Métraux sifts clues as ably as Poirot, and gives a graphic idea of the probable life of the island in its heyday. Arguing plausibly that the first natives landed from the Marquesas, and not



"No, no, they've got an enormous new radio-telescope at Jodrell Bank, Cheshire, England."

from Peru, he appears to demolish a good many of his colleagues. But, as he admits, a German professor is about to unleash some different thunderbolts, and so the battle continues. E. O. D. K.

AT THE BALLET



Concerti—Giselle
(FESTIVAL HALL)
The Prisoners—Pulcinella
(ARTS)

THE first new work to be introduced in the present L.C.C. ballet season at the Festival Hall is an abstract work in two parts by David Lichine. It is danced to baroque music, Marcello's Concerto in D Minor for Oboe and Strings supplying one part, and Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso in C Minor the other. The relation of steps and movements to the music was frequently indiscernible.

An abstract ballet which depends much, as this does, on the *corps de ballet* imposes a severe test, even with the most inspiring choreography. Though not notably exacting, *Concerti* demands a precision which it was not given by Mr. Dolin's troupe. In the result the work was tedious with little difference of mood and tempo to distinguish the allegro of one movement from the largo or andante of another. Anita Landa, Michael Hogan, Marilyn Burr and Louis Godfrey brought some life to their principal roles. I doubt, however, whether anything arresting could be made of Mr. Lichine's uninspired effort in the manner, but without the magic touch, of Balanchine.

A *Giselle* new to London in the person of Liane Dayle, a young ballerina of the

Paris Opera, made an excellent first impression. The buoyant spirit of care-free youth struck an agreeable note. There was, however, no development of the character and one's interest at the end remained at the point of admiration for high accomplishment at which it began. John Gilpin, who danced Albrecht, is the company's greatest single asset.

Bristol's renown as a cultural centre is heightened by the emergence of the Western Theatre Ballet which enjoys the support of the Arts Council. Under the artistic direction of Elizabeth West and Peter Darrell it has been formed to present a style of ballet designed for small companies on small stages—not truncated versions of established works. It accepts the narrative-dramatic element as of no less importance than pure dance.

After a preliminary tour of west country towns, few of which have proper theatres, the company has offered its credentials in London.

Though in general I do not hold ballet to be a suitable medium for *grand guignol* there is no question that *The Prisoners*, by Peter Darrell, is a powerful essay in the macabre. Music by Bartok for celeste, percussion and strings provides fitting inspiration for a spectacle of boredom, suffering and ignoble passion.

Pulcinella, by Elizabeth West, to music by Stravinsky after Pergolesi, is an infectiously gay affair in which the youthful charm of the young professional dancers is most winning.

In the company of twelve Brenda Last,

Suzanne Musitz, Barry Salt, Erling Sunde and Peter Darrell had the best opportunities and took them confidently and well.
C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PLAY

Design for Murder
(THEATRE ROYAL, MARGATE)

FROM the progressive front at Margate, where an electric organ bellows rock 'n' roll and every lamp-post groans under its gangle of coloured lights, it is a great relief to eyes and ears to strike inland through quiet little streets, and an unexpected pleasure to find an eighteenth-century theatre (1786) in good order and crammed with an appreciative audience that has learned the quality of its weekly rep. The Theatre Royal must be one of the very nicest small theatres left in England; it is charmingly decorated, and one thinks with awe of the resounding dramas that must have soaked into its character.

I was not surprised to hear that Alex Atkinson's *Design for Murder* had already been bought for TV, and if it arrives in London, as it safely should, I hope that several members of the Margate cast will come too. Mr. Atkinson has used his professional knowledge of stage people to provide not only an original background but a situation in which the quirks of their behaviour bear directly on the solution of his mystery. A producer, two actresses, two stage designers, an actor and an agent have met in the flat of one of the designers to work on the transplantation of a play from New York to London. The hostess has received a

letter threatening her death that night; and between them there is in any case sufficient friction, both amorous and theatrical, to make temperaments flare. The police have been called in at the beginning, and are sent for again when cyanide is discovered in the hostess's drink. Where Mr. Atkinson takes us from there is his business, which he has understood so well that the shrewdest amateur detective is likely to find himself in one bunker after another. I never got back on to the fairway.

Mr. Atkinson's characters clash plausibly. His dialogue is excellent, and he saves the interrogations from monotony—one of the hardest things in writing a thriller—by employing a cynical inspector whose mind is lively enough to defeat his impatient victims on their own parochial ground, so that one was gripped and amused at the same time. And the Margate company, produced by Douglas Rye, gave the play a very fair showing. If the acting of some of the smaller parts was uncertain, at the centre it was admirably confident. The performances of June Wyndham Davies as the threatened girl and of Michael Spice as the arrogant director were always interesting, while Christopher Hancock and Douglas Rye turned the inspector and the elderly star to very useful account.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Nothing new. A few days left for *Titus Andronicus* (Stoll—24/8/55), Shakespeare's astonishing cannibal picnic. *The Waltz of the Toreadors* (Criterion—14/3/56) and *The Chalk Garden* (Haymarket—25/4/56) still easily lead a poor list.
ERIC KEOWN

AT THE OPERA

A Tale of Two Cities
(SADLER'S WELLS)

TROUBLE about using the French Revolution as an operatic theme is that every right-thinking, clean-limbed opera-goer already has his own view of it neatly parcelled up in his head, result of readings in Madelin, Michelet, Lenôtre and such. Ever since it happened the French Revolution, as well as being the chief fount of Europe's misfortunes, has been a perpetual vaudeville show for the intellectual Englishman, one of the footlit spectacles of the mind, an unwritten grand opera in itself.

As compared with these myriad ideal conceptions, Charles Dickens's view is a crude black-and-white job, with sentiment in pink icing round the edges. The libretto derived by Cedric Cliffe from *A Tale of Two Cities* for Arthur Benjamin's three-act opera of the same name makes crudity cruder still.

Nor does the music mend matters. I remember my disquiet when Mr. Benjamin's score was broadcast by the B.B.C. four years ago. It then seemed



Delia Mitchell—PATRICIA MAY

Elizabeth Carr—JUNE WYNDHAM DAVIES

[Design for Murder

much too copious and clever. This production (Anthony Besch's for the New Opera Company, with Lionel March as designer and Leon Lovett as conductor) shows it to be inapt as well in part. We see lots of Septembriseur types. They are in blood up to the eyebrows. From Mr. Benjamin they get no more than a crumpled rose petal or two in the way of dissonance. The many inventive and fragrantly pretty pages did not console me against a general musical view of the Revolution which is shallow or blustering. In the wineshop Madame Defarge and her sansculottes advance to the footlights and vow to do the Marquis de St. Evremonde in. The catchy rhythm hereabouts was so suggestive to me of a hula-hula routine that instantly—and without being in the least able to help it—I envisaged grass-skirted girls rolling hips and eyes, which is not at all what Marat had in mind.

A sad business. After all that music has been through these fifty years. Revolution can never again play pretty.

CHARLES REID



AT THE PICTURES

The Wayward Bus—Manuela

THE all-in-the-same-boat formula for a work of fiction has a forbidding sound at this late date. If you have no other idea for a novel or a play or a film, you simply assemble a few contrasting characters, usually quite obvious types, and find some excuse for keeping them all together over a period of time; some kind of story is bound to emerge, and over the years it has emerged so often, from hotels, from long-distance trains, from ships, from planes, from desert islands . . . In the novel by John Steinbeck on which *The Wayward Bus* (Director: Victor Vicas) is based, the excuse is a battered little bus called "Sweetheart," and what astonished me was to find how good writing, sensitive playing and skilful direction can still bring the familiar, mechanical old formula to vivid life.

Among these personages there are even two of the familiar type-characters, the irrepressibly cheery travelling salesman and the night-club girl; but because they are imaginatively presented, one finds oneself regarding them almost for the first time as human beings, and thinking of their individual backgrounds with sympathy and understanding. They are not to be taken as types: it proves in fact to be an effect important in the story that one of the other characters who does instantly assume that they are (fictionally) typical discovers, almost too late, that he is wrong.

The focus of the narrative is the bus-driver, Johnny Chicoy (Rick Jason), who has a little roadside café where the long-distance buses dump passengers for him to drive to San Juan, fifty miles away. The film opens in the early morning, as



(The Wayward Bus)

Miss Oakes—JAYNE MANSFIELD

Mr. Orton—DAN DAILEY

he and his sluttish, exasperating but beloved wife (Joan Collins) are dressing; then we see him tuning up his bus, six passengers who have been travelling all night stumble into the café for a sketchy breakfast, and the journey begins, in floods of rain.

Everything goes wrong. Brooding on domestic troubles, Johnny does not notice through his streaming windscreen the warning of danger ahead, speeds into the "Slide Area," and hardly stops before a landslide blocks the road. An alternative very bad road leads over a bridge that falls apart with the bus on it, and later the brakes burn out and the bus flounders downhill across country, just missing a crash. (Both these episodes are handled to hair-raising effect.) Meanwhile—and afterwards, until the journey is at last completed—subsidiary stories are being worked out among the passengers, and the piece ends predictably with a reconciliation and the prospect of a happier life for all the sympathetic characters; this is a weakness taken over with the old formula. But I found the whole thing grippingly well done, and it baffles me that several critics should have dismissed it in a few lines as "dreary" and assumed that the showgirl (Jayne Mansfield, and competently good, too) was meant to be the central character.

I'm sorry not to be as enthusiastic as the others about *Manuela* (Director: Guy Hamilton), which is well done and entertaining but has the radical flaw, in my view, of being built round a type-character not freshly imagined at all. *Fire Down Below*, with which this has

points of resemblance, I described as "poor man's Hemingway," and the phrase would apply here too. *Manuela* (Elsa Martinelli) is a seventeen-year-old, very decorative waif hidden on board the tramp steamer *Concey Castle* by the oafish chief engineer (Pedro Armendariz), and the story is of the brief love affair between her and the ageing, disappointed, hard-drinking captain (Trevor Howard). He is the type-character: we have seen and read about this self-dramatizing drunk before, and it is almost too much when he goes into the familiar speech about suddenly realizing he is old and not liking it. There are good details in the film; Miss Martinelli is charming (once she has abandoned the slightly amused look we see in some of her early scenes), and Donald Pleasence is a good soapy, disapproving first mate. But it is really old stuff—not a fresh use of an old formula, like *The Wayward Bus*, but a reshuffling of used pieces.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

A striking new one of which more next week: *End as a Man*. Also in London: *A Man Escaped* (10/7/57), and *Sweet Smell of Success* (24/7/57), and for those who want enjoyable entertainment with no thinking at all there are *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) and *The Prince and the Showgirl* (10/7/57).

None of the releases was reviewed at length here. One is *Fire Down Below* (mentioned disrespectfully above). Don't overlook an earlier one, *The Bachelor Party* (10/7/57), but try to avoid the more dim-witted kind of audience.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Look Back With Envy

"BUT whatever they be [the static democracies of Western Europe], they show, in contrast to . . . other societies . . . an obsession with their own past, with history—at the moment when the greatest number in the world ever to be so obsessed, those of Asia, are struggling to be free of it. They show among their clerks as among the vestigial bourgeois and the new faubourgeois, an aping of the past, the manifestations of belief in existentialism, the breaking of canons and cadres, without anything new to put in their place and to contain or cement their society . . . Their peoples seem intent (still looking backwards) on conserving past gains and the vested interests of Labour and Capital alike, and the class and economic distinctions inherited from vanished social orders." This is a quotation from an article, "The Dynamic Society," that appeared last year in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and it is reproduced here in an attempt to break the magic spell with which John Betjeman is currently holding viewers in thrall.

Mr. Betjeman's extraordinary reverence for things past, his advocacy of the craftsmanship of dear departed Victorians and his acid denunciation of our struggling neotechnic material way of life are, of course, brilliantly entertaining; but his followers are apt to accept all he says, the chaff with the grain, as gospel, and in an age of restrictive practices their half-baked philosophy is dangerous. Nothing (they say), no theatre, tavern, canal or majolica public lavatory must



[The Englishman's Home]

JOHN BETJEMAN

be destroyed to make room for modern office buildings, factories, roads. Let the Americans and the Russians get on with their dynamic industrial revolution and let Britain remain a haven—poor perhaps in material wealth, but incredibly rich in spirit—for the good old values. Let there be no power stations, no street lamps, no plastics. Let Britain become a vast museum.

Now Mr. B., in his series "The Englishman's Home" (B.B.C.), does not preach this kind of idolatry. He takes us on a sightseeing tour of the stately homes and is the ideal guide. He finds sermons in stones and beauty in almost everything. And his enthusiasm is infectious.

With Mr. Thorneycroft and the gold and dollar reserves in mind I should like to suggest that Mr. B. be accompanied in these programmes by a clutch of technical experts—a sanitary engineer, cost accountant, time-and-motion study

specialist and so on. Then we might learn something about the man-hours consumed in the construction of a decorative dado, the nature of the plumbing and heating, the draughts, the dry-rot, the cost of up-keep . . .

I like our stately homes, but I find Mr. Betjeman's rose-tinted spectacles rather trying to the eyes.

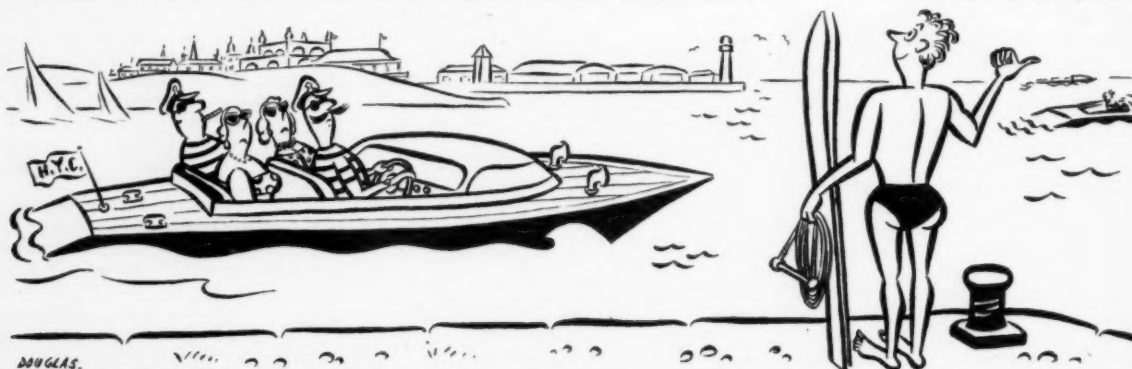
If "The Englishman's Home" were an isolated series of adulatory peeps into the past I should have no criticism to make of it. Unfortunately, the B.B.C. tends to deal increasingly with old familiar places (in "At Home" and kindred programmes), and ignores almost completely the achievements of the moderns.

Industrial design gets a very poor look-in and the architecture and engineering of to-day are seldom in the picture. We have an active Council of Industrial Design and a flourishing Design Centre, but our TV parlour games insist on using dusty museum pieces as their exhibits.

One reason for all this, of course, is that the past can be handled conveniently and easily, the present only with difficulty. Past achievements look well on the screen and arouse no acute controversy. But the achievements of the moderns cannot be displayed without preliminary research, experiment and diplomacy and without a heavy aftermath of disputation.

Nevertheless it is the B.B.C.'s duty to provide a balanced service. In a truly dynamic society television would be leading viewers towards an understanding of the aesthetic, technical and economic values of to-day's and to-morrow's design. It would look back with interest and perhaps for inspiration, but not with envy.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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